



**SHELBURNE
MUSEUM**

SHELBURNE MUSEUM

Collections Management Policy

- I. Mission Statement**
 - II. Delegation of Responsibility**
 - III. Scope of Collections**
 - IV. Acquisitions and Accessions**
 - V. Deaccessions and Disposal**
 - VI. Objects in Custody**
 - VII. Collections Documentation**
 - VIII. Collections Care**
 - IX. Hazardous Materials in the Collection**
 - X. Loans**
 - XI. Native American Cultural Property**
 - XII. Access to Collections and Interpretive Use**
 - XIII. Risk Management and Insurance**
 - XIV. Legal and Ethical Restrictions**
 - XV. Public Disclosure and Compliance**
- Glossary**
- Vermont Museum Property Statute**

I. Mission

To broaden our audience, engage their curiosity, animate their creativity, and give them an extraordinary, educational Museum experience.

Purpose

To enrich people's lives through art, history, and culture.

Vision

We envision the Shelburne Museum as a nationally significant institution that is intellectually vibrant, financially sustainable, and that maintains a special commitment to its Vermont community. It seeks to provide visitors with stimulating experiences reflecting the highest standards of scholarship and the intelligence, whimsy, and courage of Electra Havemeyer Webb.

Guiding Principles

We believe in:

- Preserving, interpreting, and making broadly accessible the Museum's collections
- Celebrating American ingenuity, creativity, and craftsmanship
- Imparting a deeper understanding of New England's heritage
- Fulfilling the legacy of Electra Havemeyer Webb (1888-1960)
- Collecting art and artifacts of the highest artistic and historical merit
- Assuming a special responsibility for serving our Vermont community
- Valuing the contributions of the Museum's staff and volunteers
- Achieving and maintaining the highest standards of professionalism

Core Values

We strive to advance:

- Professional stewardship and collection care
- Accessibility (physical, intellectual, aesthetic)
- Diversity in acquisitions and exhibitions
- A welcoming environment
- Recognition of quality
- A heightened sense of discovery, curiosity
- A commitment to teamwork

II. Delegation of Responsibility

1. The Board of Trustees is responsible for policy making and oversight of all collections activities. Upon recommendation of the Program Committee, the Board must approve all donations; purchases above \$25,000; all deaccessions; and all outgoing loans. No individual Trustee may commit the museum to acquisitions, deaccessions, exhibitions or loans.
2. The Program Committee, appointed by the Chair of the Board, oversees all collections activities. The Committee discusses and advises on collections stewardship issues brought to it by the Director, Registrar, Curator, or Conservator. The Chair of the Committee then reports these issues to the full board. The Program Committee specifically reviews all donations and purchases, deaccessions, and outgoing loans.
3. The Director administers the implementation of the Collections Management Policy and ensures ongoing compliance of approved policies and procedures by the staff. The Director recommends all loans, exhibitions, publications, and public programs, referring major initiatives and actions to the Program Committee and Board of Trustees as appropriate. All acquisitions and deaccessions are reviewed by the Director and are submitted to the Program Committee and Board of Trustees for approval.
4. The Director of Collections is responsible for the day to day planning and implementation of all collections management activities. This manager implements and supervises policies and procedures involving the storage, use, documentation, cleaning, and movement of the collections in accordance with the Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists Code of Ethics. The Director of Collections also oversees accessioning, cataloguing, and processing objects; incoming and outgoing loans; image rights and reproductions; and deaccessioning and disposal of objects from the collection.
5. The Senior Curator is responsible for the design and implementation of exhibitions. This manager oversees the formulation of the collection, collections research, and production of Museum publications.
6. The Director of Conservation is responsible for integrating professional conservation and collections care practices into all aspects of the museum's operations. Guided by the Long Range Preservation Plan, this manager oversees condition surveys of individual collections and the technical examination and documentation, stabilization, and restoration of collection objects in accordance with the American Institute for Conservation's Code of Ethics and Standards for Practice. This manager also monitors and assists with

improvements to environmental conditions in collections storage and exhibition buildings and updates the Long Range Preservation Plan.

III. Scope of Collections

1. The Permanent Collections of Shelburne Museum are developed to support the Mission Statement (Section I). The core of the collection was formed by Electra Havemeyer Webb, a pioneering collector of Americana who founded Shelburne Museum in 1947. Since Mrs. Webb's death in 1960, the collections have grown with an emphasis on folk art and the cultural and creative heritage of New England and Vermont. The artwork provides insight into the craftsmanship, ingenuity, and creativity made and used by three centuries of Americans. The collection of approximately 100,000 objects is one of the most diverse and unconventional collections in North America and is notable for its great range, quality, and depth. The Permanent Collection includes a prized and extensive range of folk art including trade signs, tobacconist figures, weathervanes, decoys, and quilts.
2. The Brick House was the Shelburne home of Electra Havemeyer Webb and her husband James Watson Webb from 1913 to 1960. The Brick House Collection is comprised of fine art, furniture, textiles, English ceramics, historic wallpapers, folk art, and decorative arts; it is considered to be part of the permanent collection. The collection was purchased by the Museum from the estate of J. Watson Webb, Jr. in 2000. The Brick House Collection is cared for under similar standards placed on the permanent collection; a caretaker resides on the premises and museum staff oversees the use of the facilities. The house is available for rental use such as weddings or special events and overnight guests are accommodated; therefore, objects in the collection could be handled by persons in the house. The objects are documented (excluding contemporary reproductions) with the same methods used for the permanent collection, including appropriate deaccessioning review and approval by the Program Committee and Board of Trustees. The Collections department is directly responsible for the processing, care, use, and storage of this collection. The Curator and Conservator are consulted on the Brick House Collection as appropriate.
3. The Archives Program of the Shelburne Museum was established in 1995 to document the activities, aspirations, and collections of Museum founder Electra Havemeyer Webb and to initiate an ongoing archives and records management program to preserve vital records of the Museum for administrative use and for historical research. The purpose of the Archives is to identify, preserve, and make available for research, records that document the origins, development,

programs, policies, and collections of the Museum. The Archives holds records created by Shelburne Museum staff and trustees while carrying out their institutional responsibilities. Records with the highest priority are those that document how the Museum has defined and carried out the core functions of its mission – collecting, preserving, and interpreting the Museum’s collections – and physical changes in the buildings and landscape. Also included are personal papers of the founder and first President of the Museum, Electra Havemeyer Webb.

Archives and library holdings have been incorporated both in Library World (for researcher access) and the collections management system which includes accurate location and tracking capabilities. Protocols have been established for digitizing historic photographs and other archival materials on demand. Digital preservation includes cataloguing materials and linking them to correlating objects in the permanent collection. Digitized files are saved on the Library/Archives server, which is backed up often, with duplicate JPEGs available on the shared drive for staff access. These protocols and procedures have established a reliable system for preserving the information for future use. As technology evolves, the continual management of digital assets is important to ensure their longevity and accessibility.

4. The Exhibition Use collection consists of objects that have been deaccessioned, donated, purchased, or created for Curatorial department use to supplement exhibitions. They are not a part of the permanent collection. The objects are entered into the collections management system for tracking purposes. These objects are non-accessioned and can be disposed of when their use is no longer required.
5. The Teaching Collection consists of objects that have been deaccessioned, donated, purchased, or created for use by the Education department. These objects are non-accessioned and are meant to be handled by visitors for a variety of educational programs. They are not a part of the permanent collection. The objects are not entered into the collections management system; they can be disposed of when their use is no longer required.

The classification and potential disposition of every gift will be fully disclosed to all donors to the Museum’s collections.

The Acquisitions Plan is a separate document that guides the decision making process for future acquisitions and refinement of the existing collections. The plan also takes into account the Museum’s existing resources and those that are needed for improving collections stewardship.

IV. Acquisitions and Accessions

1. Shelburne Museum will acquire objects for the collection through donation, bequest, purchase, or exchange. The Director will ascertain that acceptable conditions for acquisitions have been met and will recommend the acceptance of materials into the collections. A majority of Program Committee members must recommend in advance all collection donations; and purchases in excess of \$25,000 and a majority of the Board of Trustees must approve the recommendations. Where practical, the Director will advise the Program Committee prior to exercising his discretion for purchases under \$25,000.

The exception to this policy are year-end gifts, defined as gifts that are offered to and received by the Museum between the last program committee meeting of a calendar year and December 31st of that same year. At the last meeting of the year, the Chair of the Committee will designate three committee members to approve year-end gifts on behalf of the Museum.

A complete listing of all accessions for the calendar year will be provided to the Finance Department and to the Board of Trustees prior to their first meeting of the next year.

2. Shelburne Museum subscribes to a policy of selective acquisition in order to strengthen the collections. The Museum seeks acquisitions of exceptional quality through a program of active donor cultivation. Objects acquired by the Museum will meet the following criteria:
 - Acquisitions must reflect the Museum's Mission Statement and collecting goals as set forth in the Acquisitions Plan.
 - The object must have aesthetic merit, a potential for research and scholarship, and be of historical or cultural significance.
 - The object must be in acceptable condition for exhibition or possible to conserve with the existing financial resources of the Museum. An object in unsatisfactory condition for exhibition that requires extensive conservation will be considered if a monetary donation specifically for its treatment is also provided as part of the gift.
 - The Museum must possess the resources to provide proper care and storage of the acquisition.
 - The donor must have legal title to the object(s) and the full power and authority to transfer the work to the Shelburne Museum and the object(s) cannot be subject to any liens, charges or encumbrances, and cannot have been imported or exported into or from, any country contrary to its laws.

3. Shelburne Museum will not knowingly accept any object that has a questionable provenance or that is suspected to have been illegally imported or stolen. As of this writing, the Museum is unaware of owning any property that could be considered to have been taken illegally from its owner during the Nazi era (1933-1945).
4. The Museum must attempt to acquire all object donations and purchases without restrictions as to use, exhibition, publication, deaccession, or any other future disposition. All negotiations with potential donors will be performed in an unbiased, truthful, and objective fashion, making clear all provisions of acquisition and potential future disposition of offered objects. If a restricted acquisition is considered important and beneficial to the Museum, the issue must be presented to the Program Committee and Board of Trustees for approval prior to acquisition. All final and approved negotiations will be clearly outlined and written in the Deed of Gift.
5. The Museum seeks to secure exclusive or non-exclusive copyright license for all acquisitions. Transfer of copyright ownership will be clearly outlined and written in the Deed of Gift. For a donor who is also the maker of the object, a non-exclusive copyright agreement for non-commercial use will be sought if transfer of copyright is not part of the donation.
6. Museum staff will not provide any object authentication or appraisal values for any acquisition. If requested, a list of local appraisers will be provided with the understanding that the Museum does not endorse the service of one over another. The donor is responsible for making arrangements and paying for the services of the appraisal.
7. The Museum is under no obligation to accept a bequest of personal property for the permanent collection. Bequests will be considered in the same manner as gifts and the Museum may choose to accept only a portion of the bequest if the object(s) do not meet acquisitions criteria. Objects that are not considered for the permanent collection may be chosen for the Brick House, Exhibition Use, or the Teaching Collection. Bequests of personal property may also be sold at auction with the proceeds deposited to the acquisitions fund if these actions are approved by the executor of the estate.
8. The Museum may also accept fractional gifts or purchase objects from a private owner at less than their appraised fair market value (bargain sale) if approved by the Board of Trustees. Fractional gifts and bargain sales must comply with current IRS regulations. It is the donor's responsibility to provide the Museum with all documentation required for such transactions.
9. The Acquisitions Fund is a restricted account available for purchases to the permanent collection. For purchases under \$25,000, the procuring Curator must receive approval from the Director. If the purchase exceeds \$25,000, the Curator

must write an acquisitions purchase proposal to be approved by the Director and then sent to the Program Committee. The Chair of the Committee will then be responsible to gather opinions from the Committee members. With a majority of Committee members approving the purchase, the Chair will then contact the Curator to proceed with the acquisition.

The Curator and/or Director will then inform all Board members of the pending purchase. The Curator will supply a description of the object or collection, the auction location or dealer's location, and the anticipated date of purchase. (See section XIV.1).

The Director of Collections is responsible for the distribution of funds from the Acquisitions Fund.

10. Documentation for every acquisition is maintained by the Collections Department. This consists of all correspondence, a Deed of Gift or invoice and purchase order, IRS forms if provided, and other documents pertaining to the transfer of title and delivery of an object to the Museum. This documentation is required for all non-monetary donations, including the Brick House Collection, Exhibition Use Collection, Archives Collection (if accessioned), and Teaching Collection.
11. As of January 1, 2015, the Museum discontinued capitalizing new acquisitions into the permanent collection. The Museum follows the policies of the Association of Art Museum Directors' (AAMD) Professional Practices in Art Museums regarding collections and does not consider the collection objects as financial assets and the collection may not be converted to cash for operating or capital needs. Objects acquired for Exhibition Use and the Teaching Collection that are valued over \$2,000 are capitalized and listed as assets; objects under \$2,000 are listed as an expense.

V. Deaccessions

1. The Museum periodically evaluates collections to refine and expand the quality of its holdings. Through the judicious process of evaluation and deaccessioning, the Museum strengthens its ability to serve its audience(s) and practice good collections stewardship. Objects are recommended for deaccessioning by Curatorial and Collections staff and the Director. All recommended objects require board approval for deaccessioning. All prospective deaccessions will be reviewed and approved by the Director with appropriate input from a Curator, Registrar, and Conservator. All prospective deaccessions are presented to the Program Committee; the Chair of the Program Committee recommends the prospective deaccessions to the Board of Trustees for approval. If any Trustee requests a further discussion about an object recommended for deaccession, it is placed on the agenda of the next Program Committee meeting. Upon review and approval for deaccessioning, the object is considered to be removed from the permanent collection of the Shelburne Museum.

2. Any object or collection of objects considered for deaccessioning must meet at least one of the following criteria:
 - The object is no longer relevant or useful for research, exhibition, or educational activities of the Museum.
 - The object is no longer relevant to the Museum's mission and is outside the scope of the Museum's collections and Acquisitions Plan.
 - The Museum does not possess the resources to provide proper care and storage of the object.
 - The object is an unnecessary duplicate in the collection; other examples of superior quality and/or provenance will be retained.
 - It has been determined the object is a fake or forgery.
 - It has been determined that the Museum does not hold legitimate title to the object.
 - The object has deteriorated beyond repair and is no longer useful for research, exhibition, or educational purposes.
 - The object has been determined to be a threat to the health and safety of staff and visitors.
 - It has been determined that the item is cultural property or other material that must be returned to the original owner, the owner's descendants, or other claimants as determined by a legislative mandate.
3. Deaccessioned items are not returned to donors under any circumstances. Once an object is given to the Museum, the donor has relinquished legal title to it.
4. Objects approved for deaccessioning will be disposed of as follows:
 - Transferred to The Brick House Collection, Exhibitions Use, or Teaching Collection.
 - Transferred, exchanged, or sold to a more appropriate not-for-profit institution.
 - Sold at public auction.
 - Disposal by destruction in case of extreme poor condition (e.g. mold, insect damage, and thus of such little value it is unable to sell at auction)

In no case will any object be transferred, sold, or exchanged to a member of the staff or Board, current or past, or to their immediate family or representatives either directly or at auction.

5. All proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects will be deposited in the Acquisitions Fund. The proceeds will not be applied to the operating expenses of the Museum. The Director of Collections is responsible for submitting a cash receipts form to the Finance department for all proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects. The Board of Trustees is provided with regular updates about the current Acquisitions Fund balance.
6. The deaccession program is coordinated through the Collections Department. A Recommendation for Deaccessioning form is created for each object or group of objects; this form clearly documents the review and approval process. The final disposition of each object is noted on the form which is then retained on permanent file at the Museum. The accession number for a deaccessioned object is retained; the legal status of the object is updated on all relevant documents and in the collections management system.

VI. Objects in Custody

1. Property that is brought to the Museum for review as a possible gift is considered to be a loan in temporary custody until the acquisition process has been completed. A loan agreement/temporary custody receipt will be provided to the owner acknowledging the deposit and the object(s) will be processed for tracking purposes. The owner of the property shall notify the Museum promptly of any change of address or transfer of ownership. Any object brought to the Museum and thought to be of suspicious origin or provenance will be brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities. If it is determined that the Museum does not want to accept the object(s), the owner will be contacted to make arrangements for their return. Museum staff will not act as an agent for the owner, but will suggest alternative repositories for the property upon request. The period of the agreement shall be for one year unless a renewal is agreed upon by both parties. If the owner has not claimed the property after expiration of the agreement the Museum will terminate the loan and deem the property to be an unrestricted gift pursuant to section 1153 of the Vermont Museum Property Statute. The property may be used or sold at the Museum's discretion.
2. No property may be left at the Museum without approval from the Director, Curatorial staff, or Collections department staff. If an individual is insistent upon leaving property with a staff member, a handwritten receipt with the owner's name, address, and contact information will be completed and signed by the individual. The property and receipt will be delivered to the Collections department for processing. If the Museum does not want the property, a good faith effort will be made to return the property to the owner. If the owner cannot be contacted and in the instance of an anonymous "doorstep" donation, the

Museum will consider the property to be an unrestricted gift if it is not claimed within 180 days. The property may be used or sold at the Museum's discretion.

3. During the course of museum activities, objects may be found on exhibit or in storage that are undocumented. These objects will be designated as such, and thorough research will be undertaken to determine the acquisition source. Undocumented objects will be designated as "Found in Collection" after research has been completed and no source of acquisition can be determined; an accession number will be assigned at this time. If it is determined that the object should not be accessioned into the Museum's permanent collection based on curatorial evaluation using current acquisition criteria; the museum will give notice pursuant to section 1154 of the Vermont Museum Property Statute to obtain clear title to the object. For objects with an estimated market value of less than \$1000 the Museum will provide a 1-2 word description of each object in a bulk listing published in the primary newspaper in Chittenden County, Vermont in order to reduce the associated costs of processing these items. If an assertion of ownership is claimed and subsequently determined to be valid upon examination of documentation held by the owner, the object(s) will be transferred to the owner. The Museum will not honor unsubstantiated claims.

VII. Documentation

1. The Collections department is responsible for the documentation of every object in the museum's collections. This provides intellectual and physical control over the collections; the documentation will always be increasing as the collections and their use continues to grow. Original acquisition documents and catalogue records are maintained in a secure space whose access is restricted to employees only.
2. The types of files the Collections department maintains are as follows: acquisitions, loans, objects in temporary custody, deaccessions, conservation, and object files. The object files contain research, correspondence, and records of use for an object; including conservation, exhibitions, condition reports, and rights & reproductions. The maintenance of acquisition, deaccession, and loan documents shall be in compliance with section 1158 of the Vermont Museum Property Statute.
3. Every object added to the Museum's collections is assigned a unique, primary identification number. The object will be marked with this number using reversible methods according to current techniques used in the museum field. New acquisitions are given priority for data entry into the collections management system.
4. The Museum is in the process of entering every object into a collections management system which is a relational database that links all of the above mentioned documentation in an electronic format. Digital images for identification purposes are linked to each object as part of this process. The server for the

collections management system is located in a separate building from the written documentation and is backed up on a nightly basis.

5. In order to maintain control over the location of all objects at the Museum, a tracking form is completed every time something is relocated, and this information is updated in the collections management system.

VIII. Collections Care

1. The Curatorial and Collections staff collaborate closely on the care of the collection. They adhere to established professional standards for handling, packing, storage, protection, preservation, and conservation treatment of collection objects. All Museum staff that assist with the care and exhibition of the collection are trained on these standards upon initial employment and are provided with updated training when necessary. This training is scheduled and conducted by the Collections department.
2. Preventive conservation efforts include regular monitoring of all collection environments, including storage and exhibit spaces, by a Conservator. The Museum also implements a program of integrated pest management to control potential destructive damage to the collections by a wide variety of animals and insects. Prompt actions will be taken by the appropriate department to correct any problems with the collections or their environments. Conservators adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic works when conducting examinations and treatments on collection objects. A Long Range Conservation Plan has been written and guides the future allocation of resources for preventive conservation and treatment; it is updated bi-annually by the Conservator.
3. The Collections department strives to store objects in the best environment possible. Due to budgetary restraints, objects are given the highest priority for stable environmental storage based on their value, importance for future programming initiatives, and sensitivity to temperature and humidity conditions. The Long Range Storage Plan describes each area and specifies goals for improving storage for all objects.
4. Various categories of the collection have been inventoried in the course of research undertaken for special projects. A reconciled inventory of the entire collection is underway with the goal of having known and verified locations for all objects in the collection. As objects are inventoried, the location is tracked into the collections management system.

IX. Hazardous Materials in the Collection

1. Hazardous materials in the collection are a result of residual chemicals or elements used in the making of the object, residual pesticides previously used to control insect damage, or the object contains a pharmaceutical or chemical.

2. The Museum will provide staff with adequate resources for training and personal protective equipment necessary for the safe handling of objects that contain hazardous materials.
3. Objects containing hazardous materials will be documented in the collections management system as they are identified, to alert staff to exercise due diligence when coming into contact with these objects.
4. A preliminary assessment of the pharmaceutical collection is in progress and the results of this inventory will inform next steps for the safe stewardship of this collection and disposal of unsafe materials.
5. All materials will be disposed of following all state and federal regulations for the safe disposal of environmentally hazardous waste.

X. Loans

A. Incoming Loans

1. The Museum borrows objects from individuals or institutions for the purposes of exhibition, education, or research. In most circumstances, the loan period will not exceed one year; all loan renewals must be approved by the Director.
2. Extended loans are reviewed annually, and a new loan agreement must be renewed each year by both parties, unless a longer duration has been approved by the Director. The Museum does not accept loans with an indefinite duration and does not provide free storage for lenders when the loan is of no benefit to the Museum.
3. The Collections department will maintain detailed records including an appropriate loan agreement form, condition report, and photographs of the object(s) on loan. In the circumstance of special exhibitions organized by another museum or corporation, the Museum will follow the terms of the exhibition contract.
4. All objects on loan to the Museum will be exhibited, stored, and managed in the same professional manner as similar objects held in the permanent collection or in accordance with the lender's requirements as set forth in the loan agreement. All borrowed objects will be returned to the lender using the same or similar packing materials to the address specified on the loan agreement form. It is the lenders responsibility to notify the Museum if a change of address or change in ownership occurs during the loan period.
5. All loans will be insured wall-to-wall under the Museum's fine arts insurance policy for the value declared by the owner and mutually agreed upon by the Museum, unless insurance is waived by the lender. A certificate of insurance will be issued to the lender by the Museum's fine arts insurance agent.

B. Outgoing Loans

1. The Museum may lend objects to other museums or suitable institutions for exhibition, education, and research purposes where such loans are in the Museum's best interest and further the Museum's mission. The Museum does not lend objects to private individuals. All loan requests are reviewed by the Director, Senior Curator, the Director of Collections, and the Director of Conservation. Loan requests are presented to the Program Committee with staff either recommending or not recommending the loan. The Program Committee Chair reports the Committee's decisions to the Board of Trustees who have final approval or disapproval. Loan requests that are received without sufficient time (6-12 months) for review, approval, and staff preparation will be denied, exceptions can be made under certain circumstances. The Collections department manages the correspondence and documentation for outgoing loans.
2. All loan requests will be reviewed using the following criteria:
 - Loan requests must be made in writing and the requesting institution must provide an acceptable facilities report in which they disclose information regarding the museum building and exhibition space, environmental controls, fire protection, security, handling and installation methods, and insurance coverage.
 - The object(s) requested for loan must be stable for travel and exhibition. Under certain circumstances an object may be loaned if examination and conservation by an approved conservator takes place at the borrower's expense. These loans must be approved by the Director of Conservation.
 - The borrower must demonstrate that the purpose of the loan provides enhanced scholarship and an opportunity for public enrichment in accordance with the Museum's mission.
 - The requesting institution must be able to meet all requirements as set forth in the *Guidelines for Borrowing Institutions*.
3. It is the responsibility of the borrowing institution to supply the Museum with a certificate of insurance, naming Shelburne Museum, Inc. as additional insured, with the current insurance value of the object(s) going on loan. A loan will not be released for shipment if this certificate has not been received.
4. The Museum charges a loan fee on a per-object basis. Additional loan fees will be charged if a request is extended or if additional venues are added to a traveling exhibition that has already been released for loan. The loan fee may be waived at the discretion of the Director and in circumstances where a reciprocal loan has been negotiated or the Museum is a venue for the exhibition that includes the object(s). All expenses for the loan will be paid for by the borrower.

5. A Shelburne Museum staff member will act as a courier when it is determined by staff that the loaned object(s) require this level of security due to value, installation requirements, or conditions that require monitoring by someone familiar with the object. Staff members who can act as a courier are from the Collections and Curatorial departments. The Director can also act as a courier. Shelburne Museum may authorize a courier from another institution to undertake these duties where appropriate.

C. Abandoned Property

The Collections department will maintain records for all unclaimed or “old” loans if any are found during the collections inventory. This designation is for objects that are known to be on loan to the Museum and the Museum has lost contact with the lender. The Museum will make a good faith effort to re-establish contact with the lender or the lender’s heirs. If all attempts at re-establishing contact fail, the Museum will claim title to the abandoned property in accordance with sections 1153 and 1154 of the Vermont Museum Property Statute. Once title has been claimed, the object will either be accessioned or disposed of at the Museum’s discretion.

XI. Native American Cultural Property

1. Shelburne Museum is located upon land sacred to the Western Abenaki people. Called N’dakinna, or “our homeland,” this place has long served as an important site of meeting and cultural exchange. We honor and celebrate the Abenaki’s rich history as the traditional and ongoing stewards of these lands and waters. We remember that this land is unceded and recognize the enduring injustices rooted in colonialism and systemic oppression faced by Indigenous and First Nations peoples. With humility and gratitude, we remain committed to sustaining authentic relationships with Indigenous people to share this land as a place to gather, connect, and learn.
2. Shelburne Museum is the caretaker for a diverse collection of Native American materials and acknowledges its responsibility to comply with The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The Museum complied with the law by completing an inventory and informing individual tribes of the materials held in 1995. The Museum will continue to inform individual tribes as further items are added to the collection or cultural affiliations are identified. A summary will be mailed to all tribes that might have a cultural connection to the items.
3. The Museum does not hold any human remains that are known to be of Native American origin. There are two human skulls in the collection that were exhibited in the Doctor’s Offices; it is not known how they were acquired, or which doctor(s) owned them.
4. The Museum will provide access to the Native American materials for collaborations and consultations with representatives from Native American tribes and for individual research. Access will accommodate the handling of

items, use for ceremonial purposes, and other cultural practices that are requested during a consultation. The Museum acknowledges that items may become altered during handling and use. Certain items may have access restrictions placed upon them at the request of tribal representatives.

5. Care and exhibition practices such as conservation treatment, exhibition mounts or display cases, and housing in storage will be adjusted when requested by tribal representatives to reflect the cultural expertise, knowledge, and beliefs of individual tribes.
6. The Museum will consider all loan requests made by tribal representatives and communities for items from the Native American collection and will modify the conditions for outgoing loans on a case by case basis to contain costs while balancing safe transport concerns for the item(s).
7. Collaborations and consultations will be documented by staff and collection records will be updated to include contemporary, culturally responsive language for terms and materials. Traditional knowledge will be included in records and exhibition labels when approved by tribal representatives and culturally sensitive information will be restricted at their request.
8. Shelburne Museum will consider all requests for the repatriation of culturally sensitive items and for entering into shared custodial relationships with Native American communities.

XII. Access to Collections for Research and Study Purposes

1. Most museum collections and related documentation will be made available for legitimate study, inquiry, and examination by responsible parties. Access to the collections is contingent upon staff availability during the time access is requested and the extent of the materials requested. Objects or records deemed too fragile will be withheld from outside researchers. Access to materials from the Museum Archives must be requested in advance by contacting the Museum Archivist. Individuals who are interested in scientific analysis of any collection items should contact the Director of Conservation for special access. The Director of Conservation will advise on any technical research involving collection objects. The Museum requests a complimentary copy of any materials published in connection with the object(s) researched.
2. Only authorized personnel are admitted to art storage areas; contract maintenance people will be accompanied by Museum staff at all times. Special permission for access or special tours must be approved in advance by the Director and/or Director of Collections and researchers will not be allowed access without direct supervision by two staff members. The size of a tour group will be limited to safeguard collections and a visitor log will be kept. Access to objects on loan to the Museum will be governed by the same policies as long as written permission from the owner has been secured.

3. Researchers who would like access to specific objects from the collections and the corresponding documentation must write for permission in advance. If access is approved, a designated representative of the Collections or Curatorial department will provide access to the object(s) and/or documentation. Certain sensitive information, such as value or donor, may be restricted at the discretion of Museum staff. If the object is currently on exhibit, it will not be removed from exhibition. Researchers will be advised to schedule their visit when the exhibition has ended or closed for the season, at a time convenient to Museum staff. A staff member will accompany the researcher at all times. In some instances, if a researcher requires extended access to the collections a fee may be charged at the discretion of the Director. There will be a nominal fee of \$.50 per page for photocopies or digital scans of documentation; a staff member will make all copies or scans.
4. Shelburne Museum strives to make the collections on exhibit accessible to all who visit the museum campus in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Not all structures on the campus can be retrofitted for accessibility due to their historic significance; visual references are provided when possible for exhibitions that are not accessible. The Museum reserves the right to deny access to anyone behaving in an inappropriate or unruly manner and whose actions threaten the safety of visitors or objects in the collection.

Photography, Filming, and Sketching

Visitors to Shelburne Museum are allowed to use small handheld cameras with no tripod, monopod, or selfie stick. Photography may be prohibited in special exhibitions and flash photography may be restricted in some exhibitions. All photography is limited to personal use. Any professional photography or filming requires prior written permission for special access and must be obtained from the Development or Collections departments. Visitors are allowed to make sketches of works of art using a graphite pencil.

Rights and Reproductions

Requests for high resolution images of Museum objects for publications must be submitted in writing. The Museum charges reproduction rights and use fees and requires that publishers use the credit lines as provided. Shelburne Museum assumes no responsibility for clearing any rights with regard to such reproduction and the requestor shall be responsible for any copyright clearances applicable to the reproduction of images.

Product Development

Access to objects from the collection for product development will be coordinated through the Collections department. Fees and terms for use and access will be determined on a contractual basis. Objects will be handled by staff members for product development and licensing initiatives. Any method of reproduction that

requires direct contact with a collection object must be approved by the Director of Conservation.

XIII. Risk Management and Insurance

The Museum has a responsibility to identify and try to eliminate risks to the collection. This includes securing collections from theft, vandalism, and accidental damage by providing sufficient security devices during exhibition design and installation and by providing sufficient staff to patrol the exhibitions and campus. Risks are mitigated through proper climate control, infrastructure maintenance, and skilled object handling. An integrated pest management strategy provides protection against deterioration and damage caused by insects, vermin, and other biological agents such as mold.

Shelburne Museum has a written disaster plan and can respond to emergencies related to natural disasters, mechanical system failures, and bomb threats, active shooters, or terrorism. The Museum works closely with local emergency services to be prepared in the event of an occurrence.

Fine arts insurance is maintained by the Museum which strives to insure for maximum probable loss. Loans are always insured for their fair market value and supplemental insurance may be purchased for high value temporary exhibitions or touring exhibitions.

XIV. Legal and Ethical Restrictions

1. Museum trustees and staff who engage in personal collecting must avoid conflicts of interest. Such conflicts can be avoided by full and open disclosure, by advance consultation in the event of a contemplated course of action that may give rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest, and by recognition of the fiduciary duty owed to the Museum by trustees and employees.

In an attempt to avoid conflicts, the Curatorial staff will contact all board members to inform them of the Museum's intention to bid on an object(s) through an auction or a dealer. Under no circumstances should trustees bid on the same object(s) that is desired for the Museum collection.

The Museum has right of first refusal for any object that is sought as part of its Acquisitions Plan that has been purchased by an employee. The employee will be compensated for the purchase price of the object. Bequests and personal gifts from family members are exempt from this policy, as are objects purchased prior to the person's employment at the Museum.

2. Personal collections may not be stored on the Museum's premises unless for a specific purpose such as a loaned object for exhibition or proffered donation, or for study purposes. Personal objects for office decoration will not be insured by the Museum.

3. Board members, staff, volunteers, or their immediate families may not purchase or receive by trade or transfer any objects that have been deaccessioned by the Museum.
4. Museum staff will not provide value estimates or appraisals to potential donors, visitors, or general inquiries via phone or email. Staff will not authenticate works of art. Any statement of value or authenticity is for internal purposes as part of the acquisition process or for collections research.

XV. Public Disclosure

1. The Collections Management Policy of Shelburne Museum will be made available to any requesting party in compliance with section 1155 of the Vermont Museum Property Statute. Appropriate portions or summaries thereof will be a part of all collection transaction documents. The Board of Trustees and all staff will be provided with a copy of the Collections Management Policy.
2. The Shelburne Museum Board of Trustees approved this Collections Management Policy at its meeting on June 20, 2015. Section I and Section IV.10 were amended and approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on June 18, 2016. This document was amended, and Section IX and Section XI were added and approved by the Board of Trustees at its meeting on June 24, 2022.

Glossary

Accession: The process of adding an acquisition to the Museum's permanent collection.

Acquisition: An object or work of art that belongs to the Museum.

Bargain Sale: An object or work of art that is sold to the Museum for less than its fair market value.

Bequest: An object or work of art that is specifically mentioned as a gift to the Museum in the donor's will.

Deaccession: The process of removing an object or work of art from the Museum's permanent collection.

Disposal: The method used to remove an object from Museum property.

Found in Collection: An object or work of art in the Museum collection where the source of acquisition cannot be identified after thorough research has been completed.

Fractional Gift: An object or work of art with a fractional proportion belonging to the Museum and the remaining portion belonging to the donor.

Incoming Loan: An object that belongs to an individual or institution that is on loan to the Museum.

Non-accessioned acquisition: An object or work of art that has not been added to the Museum's permanent collection. Used for a variety of purposes such as Exhibition Use or Teaching Collection.

Outgoing Loan: An object that belongs to the Museum that is on loan to another institution or individual (for conservation purposes).

Temporary Custody: An object on loan to the Museum as a proffered donation while awaiting the acquisition process to be completed.

Undocumented object: An object found within the Museum's holdings that requires further research to determine how the Museum acquired it.

Wall to Wall: A term used for insuring a work of art while on loan from the moment it is removed the lender's location until the time it is returned.

The Vermont Statutes Online

Title 27: Property

I. Chapter 12: MUSEUM PROPERTY

§ 1151. Definitions

As used in this chapter:

- (1) "Lender" means a person whose name appears on the records of a museum as the person legally entitled to, or claiming to be legally entitled to, property held by the museum or, if such person is deceased, the legal heirs of such person.
- (2) "Loan" means a deposit of property not accompanied by a transfer of title to the property.
- (3) "Museum" means an institution operated by a nonprofit corporation or a public agency primarily for educational, scientific, historic preservation, or aesthetic purposes, and the institution owns, cares for, exhibits, studies, collects, archives, or catalogues property. "Museum" also includes historical societies, parks, monuments, and libraries.
- (4) "Property" means a tangible object, animate or inanimate, that has intrinsic, historic, artistic, scientific, or cultural value, and the object is under the care of a museum. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

§ 1152. Property held without a loan agreement

Any property held by a museum that is not subject to a loan agreement and has been held for 10 or more years and has remained unclaimed shall be deemed to be abandoned. The property shall become the property of the museum, provided the museum has given notice pursuant to section 1154 of this title and no assertion of title has been filed for the property within 180 days from the date of the third published notice. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

§ 1153. Property held pursuant to a loan agreement

(a) Property in the possession of a museum subject to a loan agreement shall be deemed to be donated to the museum, provided:

- (1) No claim is made or action filed to recover the property after termination of the loan.
- (2) The museum provided notice as required pursuant to section 1154 of this title.

(3) No assertion of title has been filed within 180 days following the date of the third published notice.

(b) A museum may terminate a loan of property if the loan was for an indefinite term and the property has been held by the museum for 10 years or more by providing notice pursuant to section 1154 of this title. For the purposes of this chapter, property on permanent loan shall be considered property loaned for an indefinite term.

(c) A museum may terminate a loan of property loaned for a specified term by providing notice pursuant to section 1154 of this title any time after the expiration of the specified term or earlier if permitted by the loan agreement.

(d) The owner of property on loan to a museum shall notify the museum promptly of any transfer of ownership or change in address of the owner.

(e) Prior to acceptance of a loan of property, a museum shall provide to the owner of the property written notice of the provisions of this chapter. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

§ 1154. Notice requirements by museums for loaned property

(a) A museum required to provide notice pursuant to this chapter shall mail by certified mail, return receipt requested, written notice to the last known owner at the most recent address. If the museum has no record of the owner's address or the museum has not received written proof of receipt of the mailed notice within 30 days after mailing, the museum shall publish at least one notice each month for three consecutive months in the principal newspaper of general circulation in each of the following:

(1) the county of the last known address of the owner, if known.

(2) the county in which the museum is located. For the purposes of this subdivision, if property is loaned to a branch of a museum, the museum shall be considered to be located in the county in which the branch is located, otherwise a museum shall be located in the county in which it has its principal place of business.

(b) The published notice shall contain all the following:

(1) The notice shall be entitled: "Notice of Abandonment."

(2) A clear description of the unclaimed property.

(3) The last known name and address of the owner.

(4) A request that any person who has any knowledge of the whereabouts of the owner provide written notice to the museum.

(5) The name and address of the museum.

(6) The name, address, and contact information of the person to be contacted regarding the property.

(7) A statement that if written assertion of title is not presented by the owner to the museum within 180 days after the date of the final published notice, the property shall be considered abandoned or donated and shall become the property of the museum.

(c) A copy of all notices required in this chapter relating to property in the form of identifiable works of art that changed hands in Europe between the years 1933 and 1945 shall be sent to The Art Loss Register or any successor organization having similar purposes on or before the date on which the notices are mailed or first published. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

§ 1155. Provision of mission statement

(a) Prior to the acquisition of property by gift, a museum, upon request, shall provide a donor or prospective donor with a written copy of its mission statement and collections policy, which shall include policies and procedures of the museum related to deaccessioning.

(b) If the museum has the knowledge of a planned bequest of any property prior to the death of the testator, the museum shall provide the testator with a written copy of its mission statement and collections policy, which shall include policies and procedures of the museum relating to deaccessioning.

(c) Any museum that routinely makes its mission statement and collections policy available on its website shall be deemed to have complied with this section. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

§ 1156. Property vested in museums

(a) If no written assertion of title has been presented by the owner to the museum within 180 days after the date of the third published notice, title to the property shall vest in the museum free of all claims of the owner and any other person claiming under the owner.

(b) A person who purchases or otherwise acquires property from a museum acquires good title to the property if the museum has acquired title to the property under this chapter. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

§ 1157. Exemptions

This chapter shall not apply to either of the following:

(1) Any property that changed hands by theft, seizure, confiscation, forced sale, or other involuntary means in Europe between 1933 and 1945.

(2) Any property reported as stolen in writing to a law enforcement officer, insurer, or The Art Loss Register, or any successor organization having similar purposes, notwithstanding any notice provided pursuant to section 1155 of this title. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)

§ 1158. Record of acquisition

The museum shall maintain or continue to maintain to the extent such information is available a record of acquisition whether by purchase, bequest, gift, loan, or otherwise of property for display or collection and of deaccessioning or loan of property currently held or thereafter acquired for display or collection. (Added 2007, No. 127 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)
