

George Mason University Art Collection

Art Collection Procedure Manual

The University Art Collection is managed by Mason Exhibitions, a unit within the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The University Curator (AKA Curator of Collections) is the Director of Mason Exhibitions.

Mason Exhibitions ensures ethical stewardship, professional documentation, and consistent care and exhibition of the university's artwork assets in alignment, to the extent possible, with standard museum practices.

Scope

These procedures apply to all departments, faculty, staff, students, donors, and external partners engaged in the acquisition, storage, display, or related management of artworks in the GMU Art Collection.

Responsible Parties

- **University Curator:** Leads donor relationships, selects artwork for acquisition, and oversees Art Collection management.
- **The University Art Collection Advisory Committee (ACAC):** Provides oversight and approval of all proposed acquisitions, including visual art in all media and the commissioning of public art, such as sculptures or murals.
- **Registrar/Collections Manager:** Adds to and maintains Art Collection inventory database, including accession numbers, condition reporting, photographic documentation, provenance information, website documentation, and physical displays of the collection. and physical records
- **Art Collection Team:** Maintains Art Collection storage and develops on-campus displays from the Art Collection.

1. Art Collections Acquisition Procedure

1.1 Donation Offers, Solicited and Unsolicited

- In-kind visual art donation proposals may originate from donors, artists, alumni, faculty, institutions, or community members. All inquiries must be processed through the University Curator's office.
- The University Curator responds to donor inquiries and determines whether the offered artworks align with collection policies. The GMU Foundation donation process is explained to the potential donor, including the requirements of the Deed of Trust. Curator does not provide tax-related advice regarding donations.

- Offered art donations are documented, based on available information, including: artist, title, medium, dimensions, provenance, condition, conservation and storage needs, and donor intent.

Art Collection Criteria for Acquisition

Upon initial review of an offer of donated art, the University Curator decides whether to forward the proposal to the ACAC based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of the artworks to the academic, scholarly, and artistic interests of faculty in the School of Art, Arts Management, Department of Art History, Department of Anthropology, Cultural Studies Department (or other potentially-related academic programs of the University), and future institutional considerations.
- Aesthetic, historic, or scientific value
- Relevance of the artwork to the backgrounds of the student body
- Capacity to store or display the artwork responsibly
- The monetary value of the artwork is *not* the sole consideration
- If the Curator determines that the proposed donation should be reviewed by the ACAC, the Collection Team prepares an illustrated document with justification for the donation for review by the ACAC.

1.2 Artwork Review and Approval

- ACAC Review
 - o Proposed artwork documentation is presented to the ACAC via email, including:
 - Images, descriptive data, and provenance.
 - Curatorial justification and University relevance.
 - o The ACAC votes to recommend whether to approve or decline the acquisition based on mission and resources.
 - o A Gift-in-Kind form is prepared by the Curator and conveyed to University Advancement.
- Review by Advancement and Gift Acceptance Advisory Committee (GAAC)
 - o If the Curator recommends to accept the donation, the Curator will notify Advancement that the university would like to accept the donation.
 - o Advancement evaluates the donation and determines whether it must be submitted to the GAAC based on criteria in University Policy 1123.
 - o If review by the GAAC is required, submit materials for review.

- o If approved (or if no review is required), work with Advancement to complete the process for accepting gift-in-kind following GMUF Gift-In-Kind Procedures.

1.3 Preparation for Intake

- If a donation will be accepted, the University Curator:
 - o Identifies available storage or exhibition space.
 - o Finalizes and signs the Deed of Gift.
 - o Inform Operational Risk Management (ORM) of the appraised or estimated values of the donated artworks, for insurance purposes
 - o Schedules artwork delivery.
 - o Coordinates and schedules an appraisal for valuation, if required.

1.4 Art Arrival and Documentation

- The Collection Team performs a [Condition Report](#) upon arrival, documenting physical state along with photos.
- The Registrar digitally compiles:
 - o Deed of Gift.
 - o Condition and Appraisal Reports.
 - o Provenance and Artist Information.
 - o Assigned Location.
- A unique Accession Number is issued.
- Labels and object housing are prepared, and records are entered into the Collection's inventory database.

1.5 Post-Acquisition Stewardship

- The Registrar maintains digital and physical files permanently.
- Donors receive official acknowledgment letters via University Advancement.
- New accessions are added to the Annual Collection Report.
- The Curator assists in determining exhibition, teaching, or outreach opportunities.
- If donated artwork will be deaccessioned, notify Advancement for donor stewardship purposes. If an artwork will be deaccessioned within three years of receipt, also notify the GMUF controller for IRS notification and reporting.

1.6 Record Retention

- All acquisition records (digital and hard copy) are securely stored in compliance with GMU archival and museum standards.
- Access is restricted to authorized staff.

2. Art Loan Procedure

Includes Outreach, Installation, and Internal Displays

2.1 Loans Requests to External Sources

A standard Loan Agreement form will be prepared documenting exhibition-related artworks on loan from artists, museums, galleries, and related entities. The Loan Agreement will be shared with Operational Risk Management (ORM) prior to artwork delivery. Shipment of loaned artworks will be provided by professional art shippers.

2.2 External Loan Requests

The borrowing institution provides its institutional Loan Agreement for review and approval by the University Curator.

The Loan Agreement provides adequate information concerning climate conditions, security, publicity, acknowledgments, and door-to-door artwork insurance.

The borrowing institution provides for the cost of all preparations to secure the artwork for travel and for two-way shipping costs and coordinates all logistics with the University Curator.

2.3 Internal Loan Requests

- GMU departments, institutes, and affiliates may submit requests for displays from the Collection through the [Art Request Form](#).
- The Collection Team receives, logs, and reviews all requests.
- Requests must include:
 - o Requestor's name and department.
 - o Purpose (educational, research, or outreach).
 - o Proposed location and duration.
 - o Preferred artworks or thematic goals.

2.4 Pricing and Fees

- Loan fees are estimated and approved by both parties and documented via [MOU](#) or invoice.
- If additional production funds are needed, the Collection Team provides a supplementary cost estimate for the borrowing entity's approval, including:

- o Framing and mounting
- o Technology and lighting
- o Supplies and transport
- o Labor for installation and deinstallation

2.5 Outreach and Planning

- All exhibition loan opportunities are discussed with the Collections Team before initiation.
- The team meets on-site with the borrowing department to discuss goals of the artwork display, based on the existing conditions of the space.
- A draft [MOU](#) is prepared.
- A site visit may be scheduled for additional assessment and measurement.
- All notes are retained in the project file.

2.6 Artwork Curation and Proposal Review

- The Curator and Collection Team identify available works suitable for the request.
- A proposal is developed including:
 - o Artwork selection.
 - o Narrative or educational context.
 - o Installation outline and execution plan.
 - o Potential wall texts and locations.
 - o Estimated cost and timeline.
- Once the requestor approves, a final MOU is signed and installation is scheduled.

2.7 Installation Preparation

- The Collection Team gathers, inspects, and prepares artworks.
- Hardware and hanging systems are verified.
- Wall texts and labels are reviewed and printed.
- The Registrar confirms [Condition Reports](#) and updates artwork location data.
- Tools, supplies, and transport logistics are finalized.

2.8 Installation Execution

- The Collection Team installs artworks and related materials under curatorial oversight.

- Documentation includes:
 - o Installation photographs and videos
 - o Environmental and safety checks
 - o Updated location in Collection Management Database
- Upon completion:
 - o The [MOU](#) is archived
 - o All digital documentation is archived
 - o A summary entry is recorded in the Art Collection Activity Register

2.9 Documentation

Each project file includes these digitally archived records:

- [Art Request Form](#) and [MOU](#) or agreement
- [Condition Reports](#)
- Installation images and notes
- Cost and labor summary

3. Art Maintenance and Recollection

3.1 Annual Inventory Check

- The Collection Team performs an annual audit of all displayed artworks and recent installations and fills out [Inventory Checklist](#).
- Visits include verification of:
 - o Artwork location, condition, and security.
 - o Environmental conditions.
 - o Changes or damages.
- Damaged or missing artworks are reported for repair, replacement, or insurance follow-up.
- Updated [Condition Reports](#) are created for each piece as needed.
- The Registrar compiles findings into the [Annual Insurance Report](#), submitted to the Operational Risk Management (ORM).

3.2 Expiration and Renewal of MOU

- Six (6) months prior to [MOU](#) expiration, the Collection Team contacts each installation housing party to discuss:

- o Renewal, replacement, or removal.
 - o Artwork condition and satisfaction.
- MOU holders may:
 - o Extend the existing MOU for up to two additional years, or
 - o Request a new artwork through the Art Request Procedure.
- New MOUs are generated as needed, and the Registrar updates Collection Management Database records accordingly.

3.3 Recollection and Rotation

- Upon expiration or replacement approval, the Collection Team schedules deinstallation.
- After the exhibition period:
 - o The Collection Team removes the artwork and restores the site.
 - o A Post-Installation [Condition Report](#) is completed.
 - o The artwork is returned to storage or reassigned.
- The Registrar finalizes records with all supporting documentation including [Recollection Report](#) or termination MOU.
- All final [MOUs](#) and records are archived.

3.4 Annual Reporting and Insurance

- The University Curator and Registrar compile an [Annual Insurance Report](#) detailing:
 - o Total artworks inspected.
 - o Value updates and losses.
 - o Renewals or expired MOUs.
 - o Repairs and conservation actions.
- Report reviewed by Program Director and filed with university administration.

3.5 Documentation and Record Management

- Records include:
 - o Condition and inventory reports
 - o Insurance valuations
 - o MOU renewal and expiration notices
 - o Deinstallation and rotation photos

- The Registrar maintains full archives and links them to corresponding accession records.
- All maintenance actions are summarized in the Annual Collection Report.

4. Summary of Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
University Curator	Oversees maintenance schedule, approves rotations and renewals.
Associate Director for Collections	Oversees operations and assists University Curator, Registrar, Collection Team, and Installation Team. Manages Collection Interns with curriculum, training, guidance, and instruction.
Registrar	Manages documentation, insurance, and data updates. Works closely with Collection Team
Collection Team	Conducts physical inspections, maintains artwork, handles intake / decommission, and Catalogs Artwork.
Installation Team	Curates, Presents, Installs and Deinstalls
Art Advisory Council	Provides policy and procedural oversight.

Exhibits: Related Forms

- Exhibit A: Annual Inventory Checklist
- Exhibit B: [Art Request Form](#)
- Exhibit C: Condition Report Template
- Exhibit D: MOU Renewal / Expiration Notice
- Exhibit E: Recollection and Rotation Report Form
- Exhibit F: Annual Insurance Report Template
- Exhibit G: Donation Flow Chart

- Exhibit H: Art Request Flow Chart
- Exhibit I: Art Maintenance and Recollection