

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose of the Museum and collection goals

Scope of the collection:

The Kent State University Museum, accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, holds one of the world's most important collections of fashionable urban dress spanning the mid-eighteenth century through the present day. This core collection is augmented by regional traditional dress that represents the world's major cultures. Decorative and fine art that reflects the same time period as the dress collection includes an important collection of American commercial glass.

The Museum was founded in January 1982 by fashion entrepreneurs Shannon Rodgers and Jerry Silverman with a gift of 4,000 costumes, 1,000 decorative and fine art objects, and a 5,000 volume reference library. The permanent collection now contains over 30,000 objects that are formally accessioned, safely stored and preserved, and used in exhibitions, classroom teaching, research and loans to other institutions. The collection continues to grow primarily through donations with occasional purchases. The collecting policy is framed by the nature of the original gift and by the needs of the academic programs most closely allied with the Museum, i.e. the Fashion School, the College of Arts, the School of Theatre and Dance, the Departments of History and English, and Women's Studies.

Ownership of the collection:

The collection is owned by the Kent State University Foundation, Inc., a not-for-profit entity that receives gifts on behalf of Kent State University and the Museum. The Foundation and the Museum are guided in their operations by referencing:

- The terms and conditions contained in the Agreement dated January 7, 1982 establishing the Silverman/Rodgers gift of objects that founded the Museum.
- The Resolution of Support for the Kent State University Museum passed by the University Board of Trustees November 7, 2007, followed by action on May 14, 2008, including a statement of authority: the Museum Director reports to the Dean of the College of the Arts, who reports to the Provost, who reports to the President, who reports to the Board of Trustees
- The recommendations, guidelines and standards of the American Alliance of Museums including the Museum Accreditation Program Standards.
- The Governance and Policies for the Kent State University Museum

Collections management statement:

Proper stewardship of the collection is the ethical obligation of the Museum, its staff and volunteers. Policies for collecting, exhibiting, interpreting and preserving the collection must conform to the Museum's mission and vision statements, the ethical statement in the Kent State University Museum Policies concerning conflict of interest, and the standards of stewardship articulated for the various functions that comprise Museum operations. The Museum's collections stand as primary evidence of the cultures they represent, and are truthfully interpreted for the public good and made accessible for study. The Museum

acknowledges the importance of consultation and cooperation with other museums and institutions in the management of objects and information.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Kent State University Museum advances the understanding of world cultures through collecting, preserving, interpreting and exhibiting fashion, textiles, and related arts to students, scholars and the general public.

VISION STATEMENT

The Kent State University Museum is a highly visible access point for the University, serving as a world-class destination for the study and presentation of historic and contemporary fashion, textiles and related art forms.

The Kent State University Museum will continue to:

- build a world-class collection of historic and contemporary garments and textiles.
- build collaborative relationships with the University community and regional and national cultural institutions.
- broaden its audience through electronic means, including online collections access and social media.
- secure the financial stability of the institution by building our endowments, expanding our donor base and pursuing grant opportunities.
- expand our outreach efforts through public programs, tours and classes.
- develop the professional expertise and skills of its staff through workshops, classes and symposia.
- improve the Museum facility to better meet our mission.

2. Policies for acquiring objects for the collection

Acquisition criteria used for judging a proposed acquisition are as follows:

- The furtherance of the mission and vision of the Museum
- The intrinsic aesthetic qualities of the object
- The significance of the object to the collection
- The condition of the object
- The available space for the safe storage of the object

The sources of acquisitions for objects entered the collection may be through unrestricted gift, bequest, purchase, field collection and exchange. Due diligence to establish proper documentation and provenance and to secure the truthful history of the object and conform to the relevant laws of the country of origin and of the United States is essential to accession an object. The transfer of legal title, free and clear, through a deed of gift or bill of sale from the owner, is required for accessioning.

The acquisitions committee is made up of the Director and Curator in coordination with the Collections Manager/Registrar. All potential acquisitions are reviewed by the Acquisitions Committee. Final decisions are made by the Director and reported to the Kent State University Foundation, Inc. by the Collections Manager/Registrar, who retains all records both paper and digital relevant to each acquisition.

Legal restrictions regarding acquisitions:

Museum staff members are prohibited by law from appraising or valuing museum objects for donors. If requested by the donor, the Museum will make objects available for examination by an appraiser contracted by the donor. Statements of authenticity are not provided by Museum staff except when authorized by the Director in circumstances related to non-profit institutions or government agencies concerned.

3. Policies for the deaccessioning of objects

Objects may be deaccessioned for the following reasons:

- Accidental loss or destruction
- Condition (Museum is unable to conserve object in a responsible manner)
- Insufficient aesthetic merit or is of lesser quality than similar objects in the collection
- Redundancy
- Repatriation
- Authenticity or genuineness of object is questionable or fraudulent

Such removals are only undertaken as a part of the ongoing refinement of the collection. The Museum continually reviews all material in the collection to determine the condition of objects and their relationship to KSUM’s mission and vision. Decisions to deaccession objects are made upon the recommendation of the Acquisitions Committee in consultation with an outside expert in the field.

Methods of deaccessioning include:

- Transfer to another collection or non-profit collecting institution
- Sale through consignment
- Sale at public auction
- Destruction and disposal as waste if the object cannot be conserved.

Deaccessioned objects may not be sold or given to members of the Museum staff. Any revenue gained from the sale of objects must be placed in the purchase fund for new acquisitions and when possible, the original donor’s name is retained in the credit line of the new object with the phrase, “Gift of _____ by exchange,” or “Gifts of various donors.” As a courtesy, when possible, the donor is notified of the Museum’s desire to deaccession an object and the justification for such action is explained. The Collections Manager/Registrar handles and retains all records related to the deaccessioning of an object and notifies the Kent State University Foundation, Inc. once an object has been removed from the collection.

4. Loan policies

The Museum shares its collection with other institutions through outgoing loans. Incoming loans to the Museum are considered in the context of how they enhance an exhibition or aspect of the collection. Loans are temporary with the possibility for long term loans related to specific exhibitions or research. Generally, donors are encouraged to bequeath objects in which they wish to retain an interest rather than place the object in the Museum on long term loan. Objects are not lent to any member of the Museum or University staff for private use, or to any private citizen or commercial enterprise. All incoming and outgoing loans must be approved by the Director. In general, condition reports for loans of costume must be made by the Director or the Curator, while those for non-costume loans may be made by the Director, the Curator, or the Collections Manager/Registrar.

Outgoing loans are made nationally and internationally to institutions that meet the standard facility criteria established through the American Alliance of Museums Facility Report. Requests are evaluated for scholarly merit, object's condition and the Museum's own need for the object in programming. The borrower must ensure object safety. Loans must be governed by a written loan agreement between the Museum and borrower where any restrictions are addressed.

Incoming loans receive the same standard of care as exercised for the Museum's own collection. Incoming loans are initiated by the Curator of a specific exhibition and arrangements for the incoming loans are made by the Collection Manager/Registrar in consultation with the Director, the exhibition curator and the lender. The Director must approve all incoming loans and associated costs. Loans must be governed by written loan agreements.

Denial of any loans may be made by the Director if the object, the collection, the reputation of the Museum or of the University might be adversely affected.

Loans of non-accessioned materials such as exhibition furniture and mannequins for external use are considered on a case-by-case basis by the Director.

5. Objects left in custody

Objects placed in the custody of the Museum for the following purposes must be issued a temporary custody receipt by the Collections Manager/Registrar with the approval of the Director, and the location recorded in the collections management database.

- consideration for acquisition
- research
- examination
- transmission (transfer)

Such objects are dealt with as expeditiously as possible. In cases of abandoned property, the Museum, after meeting the legal time limit without successfully locating the rightful owner, may consider the object for acquisition or deaccession.

6. Care and control of collection objects

Every effort is made to meet the highest standards of care and conservation in all aspects of the collection. Acknowledged standards and procedures for the storage and display of the collection are followed for all media of expression. The Museum uses accredited conservators when there is no in-house expertise. Object treatments are approved by the Director or Curator and are reversible insofar as possible. When there is doubt about the safety of a treatment or its execution, treatment is not attempted. Whenever possible the original integrity of the object is retained. All conservation treatments are documented and the documentation retained as part of the object's permanent record. When restoration is determined to be the most satisfactory means of presenting an object for public interpretation, the treatment is documented, acknowledged in the exhibition label, executed in an unambiguous manner, and the documentation is part of the object record. Stabilizing costumes in preparation for exhibition is not documented as it is an ongoing process of collection maintenance to support weak areas of an object.

The handling and care of costume in particular follows the "Guidelines for Costume" published by the International Council of Museums International Committee for Museums and Collections of Costume. <network.icom.museum/costume> The Museum follows the resolution on costumes intended for preservation adopted by the Costume Society of America:

The Costume Society of America acknowledges that clothing is designed and created to be worn. However, with age or associations, clothing takes on particular values and meanings and deserves special care and consideration. The wearing of articles of attire inevitably exposes them to dangers of damage and deterioration; these dangers increase with the age and/or fragility of such articles.

Therefore, the Costume Society of America encourages persons and organizations charged with the preservation of costume to prohibit the wearing or modeling of articles INTENDED FOR PRESERVATION.

Further, the Costume Society of American discourages any action which alters the original state of such articles. Since any information related to the provenance, condition and treatment of costume enhances the understanding, meaning and value of an article of adornment, the Costume Society of America strongly urges that all such information is collected and made available when that article is transferred to another party.

7. Records

All collections records are maintained in a descriptive database backed up by secure University servers, by paper records associated with each donor, and by retaining as duplicates the original 3" x 5" catalog cards for acquisitions from 1983 through 1994. Every object that enters the collection is assigned a unique inventory number and location. A digital archive exists and is augmented as objects are exhibited. Information about the object, its provenance, and information derived from curatorial study is added to the database and cataloging history is

retained, dated and initialed as changes are made. Non-confidential catalog records and extant images are available to the public on-line.

8. Insurance

The Museum carries a fine arts insurance policy. The collection is insured for a fraction of its value. The carrier is selected by the Collections Manager/Registrar in consultation with the Director. The insured name for the collection and loans in the Kent State University Museum is under the Kent State University Foundation, Inc. The Collections Manager/Registrar works closely with the insurance carrier, maintains the records, informs the Foundation when necessary and arranges insurance “wall to wall” for all objects loaned to the Museum. Objects loaned to other institutions are covered by the borrower’s insurance and a certificate of insurance from the borrower’s institution is provided to the Kent State University Museum. If the borrower does not offer coverage under a fine arts policy, then the Kent State University Museum retains insurance under its own policy and invoices a premium charge to the borrower. Traveling exhibition insurance is usually stipulated to be covered by each exhibiting venue along with transportation to the exhibiting venue. Coverage is not provided for temporary receipted objects in the Museum on examination as possible gifts either while on site or in transit.

9. Inventories

The Kent State University Museum has a uniform method of maintaining inventory records in a database, conducts periodic comprehensive inventories, spot-check inventories, and has an established procedure for items not locatable during an inventory.

10. Access to the collection

The primary means of public access to the collection are through exhibitions, publications, the Museum’s Web site and social media. The Museum meets the AAM criteria for opening hours for public access to exhibitions, and ADA access. By appointment, and under Museum staff supervision, faculty, students, qualified scholars and members of the public with a demonstrated interest in specific objects in the collection are given access to objects currently in storage as well as non-confidential records including photographs. Objects may be taken into classrooms for supervised study at the discretion of the Director. The Kent State University Museum prides itself on its cooperative and collegial attitude with which it meets requests for access and includes all students among those encouraged to make appointments for supervised study of specific objects in the collection. Proper handling in all circumstances is insured by the presence of trained Museum staff.

The Kent State University Museum allows images of objects in the collection to be published by other entities with the completion of the KSUM Rights and Reproductions Agreement Form.

11. Visitor and Employee Safety

Kent State University maintains the Museum’s physical plant and safety features that operate within the Museum. The Museum employs trained security staff to ensure visitor safety and to coordinate with the Kent State University Police and Fire Departments, the Kent State

University Office of Risk Management, and the City of Kent Police and Fire Departments for any emergency actions. Alarms are operative, and emergency exits for staff, volunteers and visitors are clearly marked with meeting places outside the building assigned. The collection storage areas and galleries are protected from fire by smoke detectors and a double action water system. The digital registration records are backed-up off site by the University. A disaster plan is in place.