



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

# COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT POLICY

## A. ACQUISITIONS

The National Museum Service will have an active programme for the collection of objects which, because of their historical, artistic or scientific significance, exemplify the history and culture of Trinidad and Tobago.

The sources of acquisition may be gift, field collecting or purchase. The following criteria will govern these acquisitions.

### i. Criteria for Acquisitions

- (1) Objects must be consistent with collection goals as stated in this policy.
- (2) Preferential consideration may be given to objects of an exceptional nature either in intrinsic value or association with this country.
- (3) While purchase is one means of acquiring an object, every effort will be made to obtain the same or similar object gratuitously.
- (4) Care of the object should be within the means of the Museum.
- (5) Objects for which proper care cannot be undertaken at present or in the foreseeable future will not be accepted in the collection.
- (6) An object with only marginal interest/value may be refused.
- (7) The provenance of an object should be carefully checked. Ownership of objects must also be established and where doubt exists, the donor or seller should sign a formal statement of ownership.
- (8) Objects are not accepted encumbered with restrictive conditions.

### ii. Responsibility for Acquisitions

The Curator shall be responsible for acquisitions into the permanent collection. In his/her absence, all proposed acquisitions are referred to the Permanent Secretary of the Museums' parent Ministry for determination. The Curator researches and gathers information about objects for proposed acquisition including photographs where possible and consults with experts in the particular subject area where necessary on the proposal.

The proposal should reveal the provenance of the object, authentication where possible, assurance that the item does not violate International Conventions.

### iii. Conditions for Acquisitions

All items considered for purchase or offered as gifts to the Museum must be reviewed by the Curator who will consult with appropriate experts on the proposed purchase or donation. Gifts, however, are subject to the approval of the Minister responsible for the Museum service.

Decisions concerning the display, storage or restoration of any particular item shall be at the discretion of the Curator.

All items accepted by the Museum must be accessioned at the earliest convenient time. Items may be used for such purposes as exhibition, education and research or stored for future use.

An object acquired as a gift may bear the name of the donor should the donor so wish.

All purchases and donations become the property of the Museum. Copyright remains with the copyright holder except expressly transferred to the Museum.

#### iv. Procedures for Acquisitions

- (1) Owners of art and other heritage objects or dealers in these objects can present a proposal for gift or purchase to the Curator via any suitable means of communication.
- (2) If the object is not accepted for acquisition by the Museum, the donor or seller is so notified.
- (3) If the Museum decides to purchase the item, the seller is to be notified and payment agreed upon, is effected. In the case of a donation, a Gift Form (Appendix 1) must be processed by the Museum, completed by the donor and returned to the Museum with the object. A letter of acknowledgement will be issued to the donor by the Curator on behalf of the Museum.
- (4) If the donor refuses to sign the Gift Form, a carefully worded Memorandum of Transfer would be accepted as a substitute.

#### v. Appraisals

Museum personnel do not appraise objects for monetary value other than objects in the permanent collection of the Museum. A donor or seller must acquire an appraisal for the item he/she wishes to donate/sell. If the Museum is asked to recommend an appraiser, a minimum of three (3) suggested names should be given.

## B. EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS

### i. Permanent Exhibitions

Works acquired for the permanent collection will be exhibited as necessary in the various permanent galleries of the Museum on a rotational basis.

### ii. Temporary Exhibitions

The temporary exhibition programme reflects the Museum's own collections in the variety of objects included and in its balance between the historic and the contemporary. It provides an opportunity to bring to the National Museum and Art Gallery examples of art and heritage object which complement the permanent collections in a variety of ways. It also provides visitors with experiences that the Museum cannot otherwise offer through its own collections, or which cannot be achieved elsewhere in the country.

Wherever possible, the programme will include, over a two-year period, at least one exhibition linked to each of the main collection (i.e. history, art, natural sciences). The programme of temporary exhibitions will also continue to be complemented by a programme of lively and informative displays from the permanent collections.

As a general rule, the Museum would not include in its programme an exhibition which had been shown elsewhere in the country except Tobago.

### iii. Displays

The displays programme reflects the range and diversity of the collections by providing a series of changing displays that address a variety of targeted audiences, promote a variety of approaches to their subject, and aim to entertain and inform, whilst consistently demonstrating awareness of the need for thorough, well-documented research, careful design and attention to visitors' needs. There will generally be sections of the core collections on view at all times.

### iv. Exhibition Proposals from Individual Artists

Any proposals for consideration should be sent to the Curator. However, the Museum does not accept unsolicited exhibition proposals from individual artists.

## C. LOANS

### i. Outgoing Loans and Procedures

The National Museum and Art Gallery will consider requests for loans of its collections only from established Museums and related institutions where conditions for security and care of collections meet its criteria.

The Museum will not release loans without a written Loan Agreement executed in advance, which outlines the rights and responsibilities of each party (see Appendix II), including:

- 1) standards of care to be accorded objects while on loan;
- 2) transportation and packing;
- 3) Insurance;
- 4) Reproduction and credit;
- 5) Possession and return of loans;
- 6) Costs.

#### a. Criteria for Outgoing Loans

Criteria governing outgoing loans may include value, rarity, condition of object and/or level of importance to Collection. Some objects cannot be loaned because of fragility.

#### b. Responsibility for Outgoing Loans

The basic responsibility to make loans resides with the Curator. However, long-term overseas loans must be approved by the Minister.

#### c. Care for Objects on Loan

The National Museum and Art Gallery reserves the right to restrict conditions under which the host institution may exhibit the work. It will therefore be necessary that the host institution submits in writing the purpose and context of the proposed exhibition prior to approval of loan.

If the borrowing institution is not known to the Museum, a facilities report may be required or even an inspection by Museum staff so that such matters as physical condition and security standards can be assessed.

The Museum will specify any special handling and/or restrictions for the loan in the Loan Agreement to which the borrower must agree before loan is made.

A condition report (Appendix III) on the object will be sent to the host institute in advance by the National Museum and Art Gallery. This report is to be reviewed, amended if appropriate, signed and returned to the National Museum and Art Gallery by the host institution on its receipt of the object/s.

#### d. Insurance

Insurance coverage must be maintained on all objects on loan. The borrower must provide insurance satisfactory to the Museum or reimburse the Museum for maintaining its own insurance. If the borrower provides insurance, a certificate of insurance or a copy of the policy must be provided to the National Museum and Art Gallery prior to release and shipment of the loan.

#### e. Return of Loans

Loans must be monitored to ensure their prompt return at the end of the loan period. Early termination or extension of the loan period must be agreed in writing by both parties.

#### ii. Incoming Loans and Procedures

The Museum will not accept loans without a written Loan Agreement, which outlines the rights and responsibilities of each party (see Appendix IV), including:

- 1) standards of care to be accorded objects while on loan;
- 2) transportation and packing;
- 3) insurance;
- 4) reproduction and credit;
- 5) possession and return of loans;
- 6) costs.

a. Criteria for Incoming Loans

Incoming loans will be accepted only for special exhibitions to augment the permanent exhibitions or research purposes.

As with acquisitions, provenance issues must also be considered with regard to incoming loans, and care must be taken to avoid loans of material which may have been stolen, imported illegally, or taken in violation of endangered species laws.

b. Responsibility for Incoming Loans

In general, loans will be negotiated and approved by the Curator

Proposed long term loans will be reviewed by the Curator, with appropriate consideration given to the cost of storage and preservation, before written permission is granted. Such loans, once approved, must be reviewed and inventoried at stated periodic intervals so that appropriate records may be maintained between the lender and the Museum.

c. Care of Objects on Loan

The Museum does not permit photography of objects on loan, although it is assumed that permission is granted to photograph loans for record-keeping, publicity of the exhibition, education or insurance purposes.

The Museum will not repair, restore or in any way alter an object without the lender's permission.

The condition of loan will be carefully monitored and reports made to the lender if any change in condition occurs. The same procedures will be followed should any loan object be damaged or lost.

d. Insurance

All loans in the National Museum and Art Gallery will be insured by the Museum. The lender may elect, however, to maintain insurance on the item.

e. Return of Loan

Loans must be removed from the Museum promptly on receipt of notification to do so.

iii. Loans to Government Agencies

Requests for loans from the Art Collection continually come to the Museum from government agencies including Embassies abroad. In acceding to the needs of these institutions, the Museum is able to show the artistic heritage of this country to visitors of these institutions.

The Museum would supervise the care, maintenance and security of these works by periodic reports and a register with up-to-date information on their condition.

a. Criteria for Loans to Government Agencies

The Loan is intended to enhance government offices and foster appreciation of National Heritage.

Loans are normally for a period of up to one year and may be renewed for additional periods as necessary.

Applications/requests must be signed by an appropriate authority of the Ministry or organization and addressed to the Permanent Secretary of the Museum's parent Ministry.

Applications/requests for loans will be considered subject to availability.

b. Responsibility for Loans to Government Agencies

All applications/requests must be investigated by the Curator to ensure that the borrower can provide works lent with appropriate care.

The final decision to lend objects rests with the Permanent Secretary of the Museum's parent Ministry.

c. Procedures for Processing Loans to Government Agencies

When the application/request is received from any government agency the Curator visits the institution or requests pertinent information about the space in which works are to be displayed.

Upon satisfactory determination that the institution has appropriate standards for security and conservation of the item in the location in which it is to be displayed, the Curator will bring an appropriate recommendation to the Permanent Secretary for consideration.

The institution is informed of the Permanent Secretary's recommendation. If the recommendation is favourable the Curator liaises with the institution to select and install the appropriate item/s.

A condition report is written and procedures are the same as for outgoing loans from the permanent collection.

#### D. DISPOSALS

The Museum will only consider the disposal of an item if, after careful assessment by the Curator, it is determined that the Museum could no longer care for such item. The procedures for the disposal of such items are the same as that for the disposal of other government property.