

POLICY

Effective Date: July 11, 2017

Approved By: President Sabah Randhawa

Authority: [17 U.S. Code § 106A](#)

See Also: [PRO-U4910.02A](#) Accepting Art by Departments
[PRO-U4910.02B](#) Removing University Art
[POL-U6000.01](#) Gifts to Foundation
[POL-U5346.01](#) Identifying and Recording University Assets

POL-U4910.02 CURATING UNIVERSITY ARTWORK

The display of art enhances the overall quality of life by beautifying public spaces and is consistent with the University's mission of providing a richly diverse learning environment that promotes exploration, discovery, and the dissemination of knowledge. This policy establishes requirements for the stewardship of campus art collections and designates the Western Gallery as the official collecting agency of the University Art Collections.

Definitions:

University Art Collections: Artwork owned by the University or an affiliate, including artwork housed inside and outside of the Western Gallery. Personal artwork on display in campus offices; public artwork belonging to the Viking Union, Wade King Recreation Center, and University Residences; and student works acquired by these administrative units or the Department of Art and Art History are excluded.

University Public Art Collection: A subset of the University Art Collections consisting of artwork displayed in a public space or location outside of the Western Gallery or any exhibition hall.

Commissioning: The hiring and payment for the creation of a piece of art.

Advisory Board for University Public Art Collections (Advisory Board): Consists of experts in the visual arts from the University community and region including the Dean of the College of Fine and Performing Arts (CFPA); Director of the Western Gallery; Chair of the Department of Art and Art History; Director of Facilities Management and/or Director of Facilities Development and Capital Budget; and an art faculty person selected by the Dean of CFPA. The committee is appointed by the President upon the recommendation of the Dean of CFPA.

Provenance: The chronology of the ownership, custody, or location of a piece of art.

Deaccessioning: The decision and process to remove and dispose of a work of art from the University Art Collections.

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1. **Director of the Western Gallery is the Chief Curator of the University Art Collections**

The Director of the Western Gallery is responsible for implementation of this policy and will ensure appropriate procedures are established for the acquisition, management, and deaccessioning of the University Art Collections. Management of the University Art Collections includes documentation, preservation, research, and implementation of interpretative programs and publications.

2. **Director of the Western Gallery Oversees University Art Acquisition**

Art acquisition includes purchasing existing works of art, commissioning original works of art, and accepting donations of art in a variety of forms. The following principles govern the purchase and acceptance of donations for the University Art Collections:

- a) **Appropriateness:** Factors to be considered include true artistic, historic, and cultural significance. The Director of the Western Gallery and appropriate advisory board judges whether a particular gift has clear relevance to the mission of the University and of the Western Gallery.
- b) **Feasibility:** Acceptance of the gift must not, in the judgment of the Director of the Western Gallery and appropriate advisory board, place excessive burdens or responsibilities of special care on the University staff, interior or exterior public space, and/or maintenance budget.
- c) **Permanency:** For the University Public Art Collection, consideration of permanency for at least 25 years is a major factor. The specific work must withstand the exigencies of weather, traffic, vandalism, and safety. All proposed acquisition of works for the University Public Art Collection must be coordinated with Facilities Management and/or Facilities Development and Capital Budget.
- d) **Valid Title:** The Director of the Western Gallery must ensure that the seller or donor has valid title to convey to the University. All information about provenance of an acquisition must be preserved.

3. **All Donations of Public Art that Requires Construction by the University Requires a Signed Gift Agreement**

All gifts are official upon the signatures of the donor and the Western Washington University Foundation and upon approval by the Director of the Western Gallery. The Western Gallery generally does not accept gifts with overly restrictive conditions for the University Art Collections.

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4. **The University Purchases Art Produced under Study or Instruction under Limited Circumstances**

The Department of Art and Art History, Viking Union, Wade King Recreational Center, and University Residences may purchase art produced under study or instruction with these understandings:

- a) They are the managers of their own collections, including care, insurance, and storage; and
- b) Student artwork must be portable and not fixed permanently to university property.

If any other administrative unit or college wishes to accept a gift of a student work or purchase a student work, they must notify the Director of the Western Gallery, who will review the work with the appropriate advisory board.

5. **Art from the University Art Collections May Be Deaccessioned**

Objects in the University Art Collections may be deaccessioned with unanimous approval from the appropriate advisory board and review by the University's legal counsel. The following principles apply to considerations for deaccessioning:

- a) The work is a duplicate that has no value as part of a series.
- b) The work is of poor quality and lacks value for exhibition or study purposes.
- c) The work is no longer consistent with the mission or collecting goals of the University and Western Gallery.
- d) The Gallery's possession of the work may not be consistent with applicable law.
- e) The authenticity or attribution of the work is determined to be false or fraudulent and the object lacks sufficient aesthetic merit or art historical importance to warrant retention.
- f) The physical condition of the work is so poor that restoration is not practical or would compromise the work's integrity or the artist's intent.
- g) The Gallery is unable to care adequately for the work because of the work's particular requirements for storage or display or its continuing need for special treatment.

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- h) The site-specific support for a public work of art has been destroyed or modified/distorted beyond artist's intentions.

Funds received from the sale of such objects can only be used for the purchase of other pieces of art for the University Art Collections or for the direct care of the collections (unless the object was gifted to the University or the Western Foundation for purposes of generating funds for scholarships or other institutional purposes). Whenever a sited work is deaccessioned, funding (from the sale or other sources) must also be available for returning the site to its former condition, or to a condition as agreed upon between the Directors of the Western Gallery, Facilities Development & Capital Budget, and Facilities Management

With the exception of a public auction, under no circumstances can a deaccessioned object pass to a member of the University staff or faculty member or to any member of their families.

6. **Director Maintains Inventory and Cost Records**

In accordance with POL-U5346.01 Identifying and Recording University Assets, the Director of the Western Gallery is responsible for maintaining inventory and cost records for all items in the University art collection.