

Policy Statement

1. An Art Collection Policy is an important tool to assist the Tom Thomson Art Gallery in strategically managing its collection, upholding professional standards, and ensuring the best management of the collection today and in the future.
2. The City recognizes that art is a fundamental part of a healthy, complete and dynamic community and follows these guiding principles in developing and maintaining the Collection at the Tom Thomson Art Gallery:
 - a. The gallery will preserve, interpret, and promote the Collection as a contribution to safeguarding our cultural heritage;
 - b. The Collection exists for the enjoyment and education of the community and all Canadians today and for future generations; and
 - c. The collection is a significant public inheritance. Fundamental to this public trust is stewardship, including rightful ownership, permanence, documentation, accessibility, and care.
3. Further principles for the Gallery are outlined in Appendix 'A' to this policy.

Purpose

4. The purpose of this Art Collection policy is to:
 - a. Guide Acquisitions and Deaccessions;
It provides clear criteria for acquiring new artworks and for deaccessioning existing works ensuring the collection is of high quality and aligns with the vision and strategic goals of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery.
 - b. Ensure Consistency and Transparency;
It establishes consistent procedures and standards for decision making ensuring that all acquisitions and deaccessions are transparent and defensible.
 - c. Support Preservation and Conservation

It outlines the responsibilities for the care, preservation and conservation of the collection ensuring that artworks are maintained in optimal condition and can be enjoyed by future generations.

d. Provide for Strategic Planning

It sets out goals and priorities for the collection and identifies gaps in the collection, areas for expansion and priorities for future acquisition and deaccession.

e. Ensure Management of the Resource

It aids in the allocation of resources, financial and human to manage the collection.

f. Maintain Consistency of Process

It directs employees to follow the Collection Manual in all aspects of managing the Collection.

Scope

5. This policy applies to all objects in the Collection and to all employees of the City who work with the Collection.

Definitions

6. For the purposes of this policy,

“Accepted Museum Standards” means provincial, national, and internationally agreed-upon minimum requirements for museum operations and collection practices to maintain accreditation or funding. Various organizations set the requirements for different aspects of the standards, including International Council of Museums (ICOM), Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI), Ontario Arts Council (OAC), Ontario Museum Association (OMA), Canada Council for the Arts, Department of Canadian Heritage, Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board (CCPERB), and Galleries Ontario (GOG);

“Art Collection Team” means the Gallery’s volunteer group of community-based individuals working with the Director/Chief Curator and collection staff who strategically plan and undertake activities to support collection policy development and collection planning;

“City” means The Corporation of the City of Owen Sound or the geographical location, as the context requires;

“Collection” means all objects owned by the Tom Thomson Art Gallery on behalf of The Corporation of the City of Owen Sound;

“Collection Manual” means a document, developed and maintained as directed in this policy, that addresses the responsibilities of employees managing the Collection;

“Director/Chief Curator” means the member of City personnel responsible for the Tom Thomson Art Gallery; and

“Employee” means City of Owen Sound full-time employees, part-time employees, students, volunteers, members of Council and Committee.

Policy

Collection Management

7. All objects in the Collection are the responsibility of Tom Thomson Art Gallery.

The Director/Chief Curator acts as custodian and manager of this cultural legacy on behalf of the City and remains ultimately responsible for all processes, procedures, and decisions on care, documentation, acquisition, deaccession, exhibition (temporary, long-term, or permanent or virtual display), loan, or reproduction of artwork from the Collection, whether inside buildings or outdoors.

8. As a custodian, the Gallery has a group of individuals interested in the Collection, known as the Art Collection Team, working with the Director/Chief Curator to strategically plan and undertake activities to support the Collection through collection policy development and collection planning. The Art Collection Team reports to the Gallery’s Advisory Committee through a member who sits on the Tom Thomson Art Gallery’s Advisory Committee.
9. The Director/Chief Curator is responsible to develop and maintain a Collection Manual, in compliance with accepted museum standards, ethical guidelines, relevant laws, and this policy, that addresses the following and is consistent with this Policy:
 - a. acquisitions;
 - b. deaccessions;
 - c. consistency and transparency;
 - d. documentation;

- e. exhibitions;
 - f. loans;
 - g. reproductions; and
 - h. preservation and conservation (standard of care).
10. All staff are required to follow the processes and principles outlined in the Collection Manual concerning the management of the Collection.

Policy review

11. The Director/Chief Curator of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery will review this policy:
- a. every five (5) years to ensure effectiveness and compliance with current business processes; or
 - b. sooner, if required, based on legislative changes.
12. The Director/Chief Curator of the Tom Thomson Art Gallery is authorized to make such administrative changes to this policy as appropriate to keep the policy current. Any revision to the policy’s intent must be presented to Council for consideration.

Related Information and Resources

Internal

13. Collection Manual

External

14. N/A

Appendices

15. Appendix ‘A’ – Gallery Principles

Revision History

Authority	Date	Approval	Description of Amendment
Council	2024-05-27	By-law 2024-087	Original
Choose an item.	Click or tap to enter a date.	Choose an item.	
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Appendix 'A' to Policy No. ACT001

Guiding Principles

1. The governing body and those concerned with the strategic direction and oversight of the Gallery have the primary responsibility to protect and promote the Collection and the human, physical and financial resources made available for that purpose.
16. The Gallery is a Heritage Canada Category "A" designated organization for collecting artworks. Its operation and standards will continue to demonstrate its ability to ensure the long-term preservation of cultural property.
17. The Collection encompasses artworks of all forms, including but not limited to paintings, drawings, prints, photographs, sculptures, installations, conceptual, digital, and electronic works. A piece of art may be a single item or multiple components. The Collection also includes personal artifacts related to specific artists.
18. The Gallery supports local, provincial, national, and international access to the Collection through exhibition, research, publication, and loan of objects to other museums.
19. The Gallery will respect the rights granted to copyright holders in the Canadian Copyright Act (1985) concerning the use of artworks or the images of artworks.
20. Collection responsibilities will only be assigned to people with the required professional knowledge, experience, and skill standards.
21. Gallery staff will follow accepted museum standards and ethical guidelines for collecting practices as set out in the ICOM Code of Conduct.
22. Although access to the Collection is part of the Gallery's mandate, the standards of care of an object will take priority over access.
23. Understanding that all objects deteriorate over time to various degrees, the Gallery will make every reasonable effort to extend the life of all objects in its care for as long as possible.
24. The Gallery will respect the artwork's integrity; it takes precedence over all other activities.
25. The Collection is held in public trust and may not be treated as a realizable asset.
26. Expectations for the Gallery's collecting practices and professional staff are based on the ICOM Code of Conduct and CCI guidelines for standard of care.

27. Decisions related to the Gallery's collecting practices are the responsibility of the Director/Chief Curator. At no time will a member of the governing body, sub-committee, City personnel, or their families or close associates be permitted to influence any curatorial decisions.
28. Growth of the Collection is based on maintaining the diversity of the holdings, building on existing strengths, and adding new works that meet the criteria for acceptance and align with at least one of the Gallery's Collecting priorities, which are:
 - a. the art of today and the past by outstanding Canadian artists (or international artists creating in Canada);
 - b. artwork by artists relevant to the region's artistic history;
 - c. artwork by artists that reflect traditionally neglected narratives and subjects in Canada; and
 - d. multiple artworks by an individual artist that reflect innovation over time.