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# Code of Ethics

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Adopted by the membership of the AAMD, June 1966; amended 1971, 1973, 1974, 1991, 2001, and 2011.

The position of a museum director is one of trust. The director will act with integrity and in accordance with the highest ethical principles. The director will avoid any and all activities that could compromise his/her position or the institution. The professional integrity of the director should set a standard for the staff. A museum director is obligated to implement the policy of the governing board for the benefit of the institution and the public. The director is responsible for ensuring that the institution adopt and disseminate a code of ethics for the museum board, staff, and volunteers.

It is unprofessional for a museum director to use his or her influence or position for personal gain. A director shall not deal in works of art or be party to the recommendation for purchase by museums or collectors of works of art in which the director has any undisclosed financial interest. The director shall not accept any commission or compromising gift from any seller or buyer of works of art.

If the director collects art, extraordinary discretion is required to assure that no conflict of interest arises between the director's personal collecting activity and the concerns of the museum. If there is perception of a conflict, the museum's governing board should be granted first option in acquiring for the museum the work or works in question. Gifts of works of art to the director by artists whose work is or may be shown or acquired by the museum can compromise the position of the director and of the institution and should be accepted only in special circumstances and with full disclosure. In such cases where there is the possibility of a perception of conflict of interest, the museum's governing board must be granted first option to accept these gifts for the museum. (Also see Paragraph 26, p. xx; and Appendix B, III-E, p. xx).

A museum director shall not provide-for a fee or on a retainer-any certificate or statement as to the authenticity or authorship of a work of art, or any statement of the monetary value of a work of art.

A museum director should not knowingly acquire or allow to be recommended for acquisition any object that has been stolen, removed in contravention of treaties or international conventions to which the United States is a signatory, or illegally imported in the United States.

A museum director shall not dispose of accessioned works of art in order to provide funds for purposes other than acquisitions of works of art for the collection (in accordance with Paragraph 25, p. xx).

AAMD members who violate this code of ethics will be subject to discipline by reprimand, suspension, or expulsion from the Association. Infractions by any art museum may expose that institution to sanctions, such as suspension of loans and shared exhibitions by AAMD members.

## Values

The Association of Art Museum Directors believes in the power of art and the responsibility of art museums to serve and educate the public through collection, research, preservation, exhibition, and the advancement of knowledge about works of art. The AAMD is guided by a set of values that form the foundation from which its members carry out their professional responsibilities. These values are the basis for the services AAMD provides to its members and, through them, to the general public.

*Commitment to Mission:* AAMD's members are dedicated, first and foremost, to the fulfillment of their museums' missions to serve the public through art and art education.

*Professional Practice:* AAMD's members are committed to establishing and upholding the highest standards of professional practice and ethical conduct.

*Professional Support:* AAMD's members are committed to promoting an atmosphere of mutual support, respect, engagement and learning within the art museum community. It is through the exchange of ideas, information and experiences that best practices are further improved, and that common issues and challenges are best addressed.

*The Public Trust:* AAMD's members hold their collections in public trust. Commensurate with this responsibility and recognizing their accountability to their institutional missions, their trustees, and their communities, AAMD's members perform their professional duties with honesty, integrity, and transparency.

AAMD and its members are also guided by these fundamental principles:

*Artistic Excellence:* AAMD members are committed to the highest standards in selecting and presenting works of art.

*Education:* AAMD's members are committed to encouraging curiosity and increasing knowledge about art, and to excellence in art education.

*Artistic Expression:* AAMD's members believe that art museums play a constructive role in society and that art conveys the rich complexity of human experience. AAMD's members champion a breadth of artistic expression and the role that art museums play in exploring diverse artistic perspectives.

*Diversity:* AAMD's members are committed to fostering diversity - in their governing authorities and staff, among the individuals within or entering into the art museum profession, in the perspectives reflected in their museums' collections and programs, and in the range of audiences they serve.

*Outreach & Community Service:* AAMD's members are committed to providing the broadest possible audience with accessible and engaging artistic experiences and to being responsive to the needs of their respective communities.