

GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE COLLECTION POLICY

I. Statement of Purpose and Mission

After the founding of the J. Paul Getty Museum in 1953 and the death of the founder in 1976, the scope of the Getty Trust's mission-related activities broadened to include a commitment to research in the visual arts. The Getty Research Institute (GRI) was established in 1983 as one of the programs through which the Getty pursues its mission in Los Angeles, and throughout the world. The GRI is dedicated to furthering knowledge and advancing understanding of the visual arts and their various histories through its expertise, active collecting program, public programs, institutional collaborations, exhibitions, publications, digital services, and residential scholars program. The GRI fosters art-historical research through various initiatives, bringing scholars together to further their own projects as well as to develop projects related to the holdings of the GRI.

II. Purpose of the Collection Policy

The GRI seeks to collect resources that enable the study of the history of art in its global dimension. The GRI is building a comprehensive library in the history of art, and is collecting and preserving rare books, prints, photographs, and the archives of artists, architects, art critics, art collectors, and art historians. These resources are made accessible to researchers both at the Getty Center and, through digital technologies, globally.

This Collection Policy ("the Revised Policy") is intended to document and consolidate the policies that guide the development and care of the GRI's collections, consistent with the GRI's mission and with relevant professional standards. The Getty Trust's Board of Trustees has adopted this policy to assure that the GRI's collections are appropriately documented and accounted for, as well as protected, secured, and preserved; that decisions to acquire, deaccession, and lend works in the GRI collections are made in a manner consistent with the GRI's mission, compliant with applicable law, and reflective of the highest professional standards, and that collection-related activities promote the public good.

III. Scope of the Getty Research Institute Collections

The GRI's collections include the general library, the documentary photo archive, and special collections. The GRI's special collections, which are predominantly works on paper dating from the 1400s to the present day, comprise rare books, prints, sketchbooks, rare photographs, and archives. Related media include three-dimensional objects such as architectural models and optical devices, as well as audio, video, and born-digital materials.



IV. Duties of the Board of Trustees

With respect to the GRI collections, the Board of Trustees has the authority to:

1. Act in a fiduciary capacity, providing oversight of the growth, maintenance, exhibition, conservation, study, and publication of objects in the collection;
2. approve all acquisitions valued in excess of one million dollars (\$1,000,000), or as may be designated by the Trustees from time to time (pursuant to §3.2 of the Trust Bylaws);
3. approve any acquisition for joint ownership of an object or collection;
4. approve the deaccession of works for sale, exchange, or other means of disposal;
5. approve loans of GRI objects pursuant to Section XII of this Policy; and
6. review on a regular basis the type and amount of insurance coverage carried for the GRI's collections and works on loan to the GRI.

V. Acquisitions

A. General Principles

Any object proposed for acquisition should be of excellent quality (involving a combination of art-historical significance, research value, strong content, and visual power); it should fall within existing GRI collecting areas; it should advance the Getty's educational mission; and it should be in a good state of preservation (unless, in special circumstances, its importance outweighs concerns about its condition; its restoration is deemed feasible by GRI conservators; or the deteriorated physical condition is integral to the intellectual content and history of the work). The GRI must be able to obtain good title to any proposed acquisition; and to display, store, and care for it according to generally accepted library and museum practices. All collecting must be in accordance with the highest standards of professional practice, consistent with guidelines promulgated by professional groups, such as the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of the American Library Association or the American Association of Museums.

B. Acquisitions Procedures

For all acquisitions, whether by purchase, gift, bequest, or exchange, the curator recommending the acquisition must do extensive research and write a detailed report, including a description of the work or collection (with a detailed inventory), its condition, date, and attribution, importance and relationship to the GRI's collections, justification for acceptance, provenance, and intentions for research projects, exhibitions, and publications; an analysis of rights and permissions associated with the material; and a bibliography of publications on the material and the subject to which it relates. When appropriate, a conservator must examine a proposed acquisition, and for larger or difficult works, a processing plan should accompany the acquisition report.

The GRI Director has authority to approve acquisitions valued up to and including \$100,000; the Trust President has authority to approve acquisitions valued up to and including one million dollars; and the Board of Trustees must approve any acquisition valued in excess of one million dollars. The GRI Director shall report all significant special collections acquisitions to the Board of Trustees.

The GRI generally does not accept restrictions on proposed acquisitions; any exceptions require approval of the Board of Trustees. The GRI reserves the right to decline a gift or bequest for any reason, including but not limited to concerns about the costs of its transportation, installation, storage, or conservation.

The GRI should obtain rights of reproduction in the works and collections it acquires, unless the vendor or donor does not own such rights or the gift is made by a living artist of the artist's own work. In such cases, the GRI will seek a nonexclusive right of reproduction from the copyright owner.

C. Provenance Guidelines

a. Inquiry and Research

No object will be acquired without assurance that good title can be transferred. The GRI shall rigorously research the provenance of a work or collection prior to acquisition in order to determine that it is possible to obtain good title. Such research should include, but is not limited to:

- ownership history of the work or collection
- the countries where the work has been located and when
- the exhibition history of the work, if any
- the publication history of the work, if any
- whether any claims to ownership of the work have been asserted
- whether the work appears in any relevant databases of stolen works
- the circumstances under which the work is being offered to the GRI.

For every acquisition, the GRI shall make a rigorous effort to obtain all available information and accurate written documentation about the ownership history of the work, as well as any recent import or export documentation. GRI acquisitions must comply with applicable law.

b. Accessioning, Exhibition, and Publication

Once acquired, works will be promptly accessioned and catalogued in accordance with the GRI's standard procedures.

c. Warranty and Indemnification

The GRI will seek representations and warranties when buying works and collections that the seller has good title and that the works/collections are free from any liens, claims, and encumbrances. The GRI will seek indemnification for a full refund for a work in the event of a material breach of warranty.

d. Ownership

The GRI seeks never to acquire any material that has not been lawfully owned and offered for sale or donation. When researching potential acquisitions, the GRI regularly consults databases such as Stolen-Book.org (mounted by the International League of Antiquarian Booksellers) and Ex Libris as well as other sources that account for stolen materials, and examines questionable marks or conditions of objects and collections. The GRI will take appropriate steps, promptly and in good faith, to address another party's claim to ownership of a

work in its collection. These steps may, in the appropriate circumstances, include a decision to transfer the object to the claimant, provided that such a transfer is consistent with the Trustees' legal and fiduciary duties as stewards of a charitable trust.

VI. Jointly Owned Works of Art

In some circumstances, it may benefit the GRI to share ownership of a work or collection with another institution or individual. All proposals to share ownership of a work or collection must be approved in advance by the Board of Trustees, and should carefully consider all of the proposed terms of joint ownership, including but not limited to, each owner's responsibility for storing and conserving the work or collection; for sharing the costs, if any, of acquisition; and for allocating rights of exhibition and publication. Curators should work closely with the Office of the General Counsel on appropriate terms and conditions for any joint acquisition.

VII. Staff Policies Related to Acquisitions

A. Appraisals

The GRI does not provide appraisals to donors. Consistent with IRS guidelines, the GRI cannot act as a qualified appraiser because of the inherent conflict with its role as a donee. If a donor asks for assistance in locating an appropriate appraiser, a Trust employee may suggest several qualified appraisers, but more than one name must be provided. The GRI should not make arrangements for the appraisal and cannot pay for the appraisal. The GRI may provide an appraiser with access to the work or collection, images of works, and any appropriate and relevant factual information in the GRI's possession.

B. Personal Collecting

The Trust recognizes that Trustees and employees may collect works of art for their personal enjoyment. Trustees and employees must exercise good judgment and take care to avoid conflicts of interest between themselves and the GRI, and must be familiar with and adhere to applicable Trust ethics policies. A Trustee or employee who learns of an object available for purchase that is reasonably likely to be of interest to the GRI may not compete with the GRI and is expected to place the interests of the GRI ahead of his or her own interests in acquiring the object.

VIII. Deaccessioning

A. General

In forming and maintaining a collection of the highest quality, the Board of Trustees considers it legitimate and desirable to refine the collection through the occasional sale, exchange, or donation of previously acquired materials. The purpose of removing objects from the collection (also known as deaccessioning) is to strengthen the collection. The GRI will honor all legal restrictions imposed on a gift or bequest of

objects, as well as, to the extent feasible, precatory requests accompanying gifts or bequests.

B. Criteria

Objects may be removed from the GRI's collections for any of the following reasons, without limitation:

1. Proceeds from the sale of the object can enhance the collection by providing acquisition funds.
2. The object is deemed inferior in quality to the overall standard of the collection.
3. The object is duplicative and thus deemed unnecessary to retain.
4. The object can be exchanged as full or partial compensation for a more desirable work.
5. The condition of the object is such that repairs are not feasible or will render the object essentially false.
6. The object is a forgery or reproduction.
7. The object does not belong to any field within those that the GRI collects.
8. A trade involving the object is available and is deemed advantageous with respect to the collection of the GRI.
9. Possession of the object violates the law or applicable Trust policy.

C. Guidelines

1. **Approvals.** The Director and President may approve the deaccessioning of objects valued up to and including \$100,000. The Board of Trustees must approve the deaccessioning of objects valued higher than \$100,000. All deaccession decisions must be promptly reported to the Board of Trustees.
2. **Proceeds.** Proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects will be credited to the GRI's acquisitions funds. Expenses incurred in the disposal of an object (with the exception of a seller's premium at auction) will come from GRI operations and will not be deducted from the proceeds of the sale.
3. **Restrictions.** Before recommending the deaccessioning of any object, the GRI shall confirm that it has good title to the object (unless title concerns are the basis for deaccessioning) and that there are no legally binding restrictions that prevent disposal. When legally binding restrictions are attached to an object, they will be observed unless the GRI is relieved from compliance with such restrictions by appropriate legal authorities
4. **Credit to Donors.** In the case of sale or exchange of gifts or bequests, credit to the donor will be transferred to resulting acquisitions where appropriate.
5. **Notification.** In the case of an unrestricted gift, the GRI will make a reasonable effort to contact the donor to apprise him or her of the proposed removal. Such action shall not be construed as a request for permission to deaccession.
6. **Term of Possession for Gifts.** Accessioned works must remain in the collection for at least three years before being deaccessioned.
7. **Forgeries and Reproductions.** A forgery will be so marked and the GRI will not return it to the market, unless disposal can be accomplished in a reasonable manner, without confusion to a potential buyer.
8. **Records.** The GRI registrar's office will maintain a permanent record of any work

- deaccessioned, including a report on its condition and the circumstances of its removal from the collection.
9. **Methods of Disposition.** The methods of disposition may vary according to the existing market for each type of object and according to current market conditions. There are six principal methods of disposing of deaccessioned objects:
 - a. by sale at public auction;
 - b. by sale through consignment, by whole or partial exchange, or by direct sale to a dealer or other buyer;
 - c. by gift, whole or partial exchange, or direct sale to another suitable institution;
 - d. by return to the original vendor for reimbursement;
 - e. by return to a previous owner or to the country of origin, for such compensation as is deemed appropriate;
 - f. if there is minimal or no market value, deaccessioned objects may be assigned as study material for research or conservation.
 10. **Ethical Considerations.** GRI staff, Trustees, their spouses, or entities in which these individuals or their spouses hold a beneficial interest exceeding five percent, may not acquire directly or indirectly a deaccessioned object or otherwise benefit from its sale or trade. No deaccessioned objects may be acquired from the GRI by any person or entity barred from transacting business with the GRI by applicable law or Trust policy.

IX. Care of the Collections

The GRI is entrusted with the preservation of its collections, as well as works of art on loan, and must be guided by respect for the integrity and conservation of the work. Conservation is essential to the GRI's stewardship of its collections. The GRI shall conserve works of art in accordance with the highest standards. The GRI shall provide a safe, stable and appropriate environment for its collections, with effective security and environmental control, for the benefit of present and future generations. The GRI should maintain appropriate standards of handling, storage, and, when applicable, installation, to preserve works in the collections. The GRI's standards for care of the collections shall be maintained for works of art on loan to the GRI or borrowed from the GRI.

X. Records and Inventories

The GRI, through its curatorial, registrar, and conservation departments, shall maintain accurate, up-to-date records on the identification, location, and condition of all objects in the collection, as well as of ongoing activities such as exhibitions, loans, research, and correspondence with donors, artists, and scholars. These records should be recorded in the GRI's collections management database. Any original paper files regarding the acquisition of objects should also be retained in the central files. The curatorial department maintains coherent, organized records on accessioned, non-accessioned, and deaccessioned works of art in the special collections, departmental loans, exhibition loans, and works brought into the GRI for possible purchase or gift. The special collections cataloguing team and the GRI registrars are responsible for updating and maintaining records for their collections and for administering the online catalogue rights to ensure limited and appropriate access to confidential records.

All records created or received in the transaction of the GRI's proper business are the

property of the GRI and must not be dispersed or destroyed except in accordance with its record retention policy.

The GRI shall make available to qualified researchers and scholars materials relating to the collections unless they are confidential or would suffer physical harm if handled.

Getty security officers will make daily inspections of the GRI library vaults, its galleries, and exhibition cases. The inventory of GRI collections is subject to review by internal auditors.

XI. Access to GRI Collections

The GRI is dedicated to the presentation, conservation, study, and interpretation of the world's artistic legacy. The GRI pursues its mission locally, nationally, and internationally, serving both the general interested public and a wide range of professional communities in order to promote a vital civil society through an understanding of the visual arts.

Among the primary means for the GRI to fulfill this mission is the provision of access to the research library, the photo archive, and to the special collections. The latter can be visited by scheduled appointments in the Special Collections Reading Room (SCRR), which is open Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Exhibitions also fulfill this mission by presenting materials from the GRI's special collections and objects borrowed from other owners. The GRI provides additional access to its collections through loans to other exhibiting institutions. The GRI supports scholarly investigation and research of its collections in the form of its scholars program, and the development of research projects and publications, which advance the understanding of the GRI's collections and contribute to broader academic and public discourses. In addition, a considerable amount of the GRI's collections are available on line. Digitization of the collections in order to make them accessible to an international audience is a high priority for the GRI.

Access to collections and related information is also furthered through educational initiatives such as classes and courses held on special collections materials, through public programs, and through digital means such as the Getty website, social media, podcasts, and interactive forms of engagement, e.g., digital tours through the GRI's exhibitions.

XII. Outgoing Loans

1. General

In order to make the collections available to a larger public and to advance art-historical research, the GRI will lend works from its special collections.

2. Criteria

Loans will be made to qualified institutions for exhibition, display, or other educational purposes based on the following criteria:

- a. the quality of the borrower's project, including its scholarly purpose and the public exposure the loan can give to the object;
- b. the condition of the object and its ability to withstand the rigors of transport, handling, and public display;
- c. the ability of the borrower to handle, install, secure, display, and otherwise care for the object safely; and
- d. a risk assessment of the external environment of the borrower, including war, terrorism, extreme weather conditions, etc.

3. Guidelines

- a. All significant loans must be approved by the Director and reported to the Board of Trustees.
- b. Individual loans valued at one million dollars and higher will be presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- c. Every loan will be governed by a written agreement stating the requirements and conditions to which the borrower must agree. All loans shall be made for specified periods of time.
- d. The GRI typically lends only to public or private libraries and museums and other cultural institutions. Loans will not be made to private individuals or commercial galleries except under exceptional circumstances.

XIII. Effective Date

This Revised Policy shall be effective immediately upon approval by the Board of Trustees and shall supersede all prior policies on the topics addressed herein.