



**Membership of AAMD Approves Change to Deaccessioning Rule,
Bringing Policy in Line with American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and
Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB)**

**New Rule Permits Use of Funds from Deaccessioned Art
For Direct Care of Objects, Narrowly Defined**

New York, NY—September 30, 2022—The Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) announced today that following a week of electronic voting, AAMD’s members have approved a change to Professional Practices in Art Museums to narrowly change the approved use of funds from deaccessioned art. The new rule was approved with 109 votes in favor; a simple majority of AAMD’s 199 voting-eligible members was required for this resolution to pass. Members were given four days in which to place their vote, a total of 130 votes were cast. The new rule will allow funds generated by the sale of deaccessioned art to be used for direct care of objects in a museum’s collection, with a very specific definition of “direct care.” This change brings AAMD’s policy in alignment both with the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) and the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB)—and goes further than either AAM or FASB by providing a specific definition for “direct care.”

“This is an important update to AAMD’s policies, an evolutionary change that is the culmination of nine months of work by a Task Force comprised of 18 members and ably led by Rod Bigelow of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art,” said Julián Zugazagoitia, AAMD’s president and director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. “More than a year before the pandemic, members of AAMD were discussing issues around collecting and collections management, recognizing that many within the Association wanted more flexibility, and also noting that our approach was no longer in sync with our colleagues at the American Alliance of Museums or the rules enacted by Financial Accounting Standards Board. This focused change addresses changes requested by members, ensures our approach is consistent with norms across the museum field, and provides crucial guidance to members on how to implement a ‘direct care’ standard should their institutions choose to do so.”

The new rule, number 25 in Professional Practices, reads as follows:

Funds received from the disposal of a deaccessioned work of art including any earnings and appreciation thereon, may be used only for the acquisition of works of art in a manner consistent with the museum’s policy on the use of restricted acquisition funds or for direct care of works of art. Direct care for purposes of this section means the direct costs associated with the storage or preservation of works of art. Such direct costs include for example those for (i) conservation and restoration treatments (including packing and transportation for such conservation or restoration) and (ii) materials required for storage of all classifications of works of art, such as, acid-free paper, folders, matboard, frames, mounts, and digital media migration. Funds received from the disposal of a deaccessioned work of art shall not be used for operations or capital expenses except as provided above. Direct care does not include (a) salaries of staff or (b) costs incurred for the sole purpose of temporary exhibition display.

This replaces the earlier version of section 25, which read as follows:

Funds received from the disposal of a deaccessioned work shall not be used for operations or capital expenses. Such funds, including any earnings and appreciation thereon, may be used only for the acquisition of works of art in a manner consistent with the museum’s policy on the use of restricted acquisition funds. In order to account properly for their use, the AAMD recommends that such funds, including any earnings and appreciation, be tracked separately from other acquisition funds.

The process that led to this change began in January 2022, when AAMD’s Board of Trustees appointed a Task Force to focus on two questions. The first question was to consider whether to recommend that AAMD change Professional Practices in Art Museums to permit the use of funds from deaccessioned art for direct care of collections. The second question, dependent on the first, was to propose a definition of direct care if the group thought that such a change was recommended. A recommended change from the Task Force would then need to be reviewed and approved first by the Board of Trustees and then by the membership as a whole. The Trustees reviewed and approved the policy change over the summer, and members had the opportunity to vote [last week].

“This is a good change for AAMD, recognizing a philosophical shift within our membership as well as the earlier changes made by important collegial institutions such as AAM,” said Rod Bigelow, chair of the Task Force and director of the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. “The Task Force reflected diverse points of view within our membership as a whole, which was essential to achieving this outcome, and I want to thank the members for their time and commitment to the process. We all understood that any change to a rule that this Association has carefully guarded for several decades must be narrow and focused, and we have achieved that. Equally important is the recognition that this change is the ceiling, not the floor. It provides some additional flexibility for our members should their institutions want it, but does not require any museum to change its current policy.”

The electronic vote was managed by Honest Ballot for AAMD. This process ensured voting accuracy and authenticity, with each eligible member allowed one vote through a unique ID tied to their email address—and at the same time ensured anonymity for participating members. Members were given four days in which to place their vote.

In addition to Bigelow, the members of the Task Force were:

- Christopher Bedford, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
- Thomas Campbell, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco
- Jill Deupi, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami
- William Eiland, Georgia Museum of Art
- Brian Ferriso, Portland Art Museum
- Amy Gilman, Chazen Museum of Art
- Lial Jones, Crocker Art Museum (past AAMD President)
- Stephan Jost, Art Gallery of Ontario
- Glenn Lowry, The Museum of Modern Art
- Matthew McLendon, The Fralin Museum of Art at the University of Virginia
- Jill Medvedow, Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston
- Marcelle Polednik, Milwaukee Art Museum
- Janne Sirén, Albright-Knox Art Gallery
- Scott Stulen, Philbrook Museum of Art
- Belinda Tate, Kalamazoo Institute of Arts
- Susan Taylor, New Orleans Museum of Art
- Julián Zugazagoitia, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (AAMD President)

About AAMD

The Association of Art Museum Directors advances the profession by cultivating leadership capabilities of directors, advocating for the field, and fostering excellence in art museums. An agile, issues-driven organization, AAMD has three desired outcomes: engagement, leadership, and shared learning. Further information about AAMD's professional practice guidelines and position papers is available at www.aamd.org.

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