
Ethics Policy

Art Collection and
Galleries 2011

Sweet Briar College

Introduction

The mission of The Sweet Briar College Art Collection and Galleries (hereafter “Art Gallery”) is:

The Sweet Briar College Art Collection and Galleries support the academic curriculum and the cultural life of the College by providing, for teaching and study purposes, a permanent collection of original works of art and by the presentation of exhibitions drawn from the permanent collection or loaned works. Primarily serving Sweet Briar students and professors, the permanent collection, associated exhibitions, and related programs also support the College’s outreach to alumnae, prospective students, peer institutions, and the general public, and provide service to the broader regional and educational community. They maintain as their core purposes 1) the support of classroom and experiential learning and the stimulation and advancement of research in a variety of humanities disciplines; 2) the inspiration of creative work across all the arts; and 3) the cultivation of an appreciation for and understanding of the visual arts within the scope of a liberal arts education.

The day-to-day welfare of the collection is the responsibility of the professional staff of the College’s Art Collection and Galleries (hereafter “staff” or “Art Gallery staff”). The staff directs its efforts toward the responsible management of the collection and all attendant records. The staff is aided in this work by the support and advice of: the board of the Friends of Art and the full-time faculty of the Art History and Studio Art departments (hereafter “advisors”). The Gallery director reports to the dean of the faculty.

Sweet Briar College’s articles of incorporation, bylaws, mission statement, and operating policies, as approved by the College’s board of directors and administered by its president and senior staff, will govern the Art Gallery’s operations. In addition, in matters concerning collection management and care, the Art Gallery staff and its advisors will be guided by the standards of professional conduct, ethics, and methodology advocated by the American Association of Museums and the College Art Association. In matters concerning collection management and care, the Art Gallery staff and its advisors will adhere to all applicable local, state, and federal legislation, and all pertinent international agreements.

This document will be reviewed on a regular basis (not less than once every five years) by the Art Gallery director, and will be revised and re-approved as circumstances warrant.

Public Service

The museum profession recognizes public service to be of fundamental significance. In this vein, in its collections care, development and presentation of exhibitions and related programs, the Art Gallery staff will be guided by a concern for facilitating scholarship and pedagogy, providing broad access to the College community and to the general public as feasible, promoting intellectual integrity and encouraging productive curiosity, recognizing pluralistic cultural values, and providing prudent stewardship of Art Gallery and College resources. In the Art Gallery's exhibitions and programs, the staff, with the aid of its advisors, will endeavor to present a balanced, well-informed interpretation of the history of art, including contemporary art, which takes into account the diversity of human creativity in the visual arts.

Controversial Art and Artists

Any museum that exhibits and collects contemporary art will inevitably display or acquire objects that address controversial issues, present disturbing images, and/or invite critical debate. While the Art Gallery will not actively seek out controversy, neither will it avoid addressing difficult or disturbing issues in the art that it exhibits and collects. In keeping with the College's educational mission and the standards of the museum profession at large, the Art Gallery will not censor legitimate artistic expression. However, in keeping with the Art Gallery's responsibility towards its community, the director, in consultation with staff, advisors, and College administrators, may choose to provide cautionary information to visitors about certain objects or exhibitions. The integrity of the art object and the artist's expression will remain a paramount concern.

Development

Due to the nature of a museum, the Art Gallery's staff and advisors have access to confidential information about the collection and about College students, alumnae, patrons, and donors. Access to this information is a privilege, and it shall be treated with the utmost respect and care.

Fund raising is an important aspect of the prudent operation of the Art Gallery. Support from businesses, individuals, foundations, and government sources significantly affects the quality of exhibitions and programs and the scope of its operations. The Art Gallery director will work closely with the College's senior administrators and

development office staff to ensure that solicitations are undertaken to the best advantage of the Art Gallery in particular and the College as a whole and are in keeping with the College's operational policies regarding charitable gifts. She/he will work with College colleagues to ensure that fund raising on behalf of the Art Gallery conforms to the museum profession's best practices and that conflicts of interest are avoided. The Art Gallery director should be involved in all substantive discussions of fund raising related to the permanent collection, the Art Gallery's programming, and the facilities that house the collection and serve as a venue for exhibitions.

Issues such as the public recognition of sponsors, use of corporate logos in Art Gallery spaces or publications, special privileges granted sponsors, use of the Art Gallery name or logo, or use of an image from the collection in a sponsor's announcements or publications are consequential. The Art Gallery, College development office, and the sponsor should all clearly articulate any conditions, expectations, or obligations in writing before programming or project support is accepted.

The Art Gallery will avoid accepting support from commercial art galleries. No contribution from an individual or a corporate sponsor will be accepted if it is contingent upon accepting a donation of art work, purchasing particular art work, or hosting a particular exhibition or program.

The Art Gallery, with the aid of the College development office, operates a membership program, known as the Friends of Art (FOA). While the operation of FOA is governed by a constitution, bylaws, and a mission statement distinct from that of the Art Gallery, the group does not raise or maintain funds or involve itself in activities such as art collecting or the presentation of exhibitions independent of the College. Membership in FOA does not provide any individual with any privileges other than the group's published benefits. Proceeds from membership dues will be used by the Art Gallery staff to support acquisitions, educational programs, exhibitions, and care of the permanent collection. They will not be used to support operating costs such as salaries or routine building maintenance, nor will any department of the College except the Art Gallery use them. In recognition of FOA's crucial and faithful support over the years, the Art Gallery director and/or development office staff will regularly up-date its board on the state of the group's funds and will solicit their recommendations on the use of those funds.

All fund raising activities will be documented and records will be kept in the Art Gallery office and/or in the College development office. The Art Gallery staff will rely on colleagues in the College's development and business offices for appropriate record keeping and financial accounting regarding financial support.

General Demeanor

Art Gallery staff has regular contact with students, faculty, administrators, campus visitors, trustees, supporters, alumnae, and prospective students, and due to the nature of its mission and programming, the Art Gallery staff and its advisors are liaisons on behalf of the College to the general public. As representatives of both the Art Gallery and College, they should behave in a responsible, cordial, and professional manner when conducting Art Gallery business.

Conflict of Interest

Because the Art Gallery occupies a position of public trust within the College and the general community, as well as within the museum profession at large, any conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, in its operation is at odds with its mission and can harm its reputation. Thus, staff and advisors alike should avoid situations that place, or may appear to place, their motives or actions in question. In general, Art Gallery staff and advisors should carry out their responsibilities with the good of the organization, not individual personal benefit, in mind. With regard to the Art Gallery collection and programming in particular:

- Objects for the collection will not be purchased from any College employee, volunteer, advisor, or trustee, or by from relative thereof. Exceptions may be made in the case of studio art faculty members, though acquisitions of their work will be subject to the same standards and procedures as are any others.
- The Art Gallery director will not make appraisals of donated or bequeathed objects on behalf of any donor.
- The Art Gallery director will offer her/his professional opinion as to fair market value under \$5,000 of gifts or bequests for use by the College's office of alumnae and development.
- The Art Gallery staff will not provide appraisal services to any member of the College community or the general public.
- Objects deaccessioned from the permanent collection may not be acquired by any Art Gallery or College employee, volunteer, advisor, or trustee, or by any relative thereof, nor may the sale or disposal of any object be to the personal benefit of any employee, volunteer, advisor, or trustee, or any relative thereof.

- The Art Gallery will avoid selecting exhibitions or programs that are directly linked to, or that substantially benefit, any College employees, College trustees, College supporters, and any family members thereof. Exceptions may be made in the case of faculty members serving as guest curators or exhibiting their own art, though exhibition projects in which they are involved will be subject to the same standards and procedures as are other Art Gallery programs.

If any member of the Art Gallery staff or any advisor feels that a conflict of interest exists between her/his responsibilities and personal or outside business activities, she/he should discuss the matter candidly with the director. The director should discuss any such matters as they pertain to her/him with the dean of the faculty.

Personal Collecting

Art Gallery staff and advisors shall exercise discretion and common sense in pursuit of any private collecting interests. While it is to be expected that persons associated with an art museum will collect art, no Art Gallery staff or advisor should compete with the Art Gallery for objects. No Art Gallery staff or advisor should use that relationship to enhance or benefit, directly or indirectly, her/his personal collecting activities.

Any loans of objects personally owned by a member of the Art Gallery staff, College administrator, faculty, or trustee should be credited in an exhibition or publication as an anonymous loan.

If any member of the Art Gallery staff or any advisor feels that a conflict of interest may arise between her/his responsibilities and personal collecting activities, she/he should discuss the matter candidly with the director. The director should discuss any such matters as they pertain to her/him with the dean of the faculty.

Research

In performing research associated with Art Gallery projects or the collection, the staff is expected to comply with professional standards with regard to documentation, accuracy, and interpretative techniques. Individuals are also expected to share the results of such research freely with colleagues and students.

Original research performed in the course of an Art Gallery staff member's regular workday should be confined to subjects related to Art Gallery projects or the collection. If such research is published, acknowledgement should be made to the Art

Gallery and the College. If remuneration is received for such research, it should be surrendered to the College, preferably for use in the Art Gallery's general operating budget. Similarly, any copyrights or royalties associated with such work accrue to the College, the Art Gallery's parent organization.

Expectations of ownership, fees, royalties, or copyrights regarding research performed by guest curators or by Sweet Briar faculty working on behalf of the Art Gallery should be articulated in any letters of agreement or contracts between the College and the individual scholar before any project commences. These should be in keeping with the College's standard policies and procedures. Outside scholars who publish on works in the College collection will be expected to acknowledge and/or credit the Art Gallery and College in a manner appropriate to the publication (e.g. caption on a photo, archival source for a bibliography).

Work Outside the Art Gallery and College

Staff members may seek additional employment outside the Art Gallery and the College in keeping with the College's standard policies and procedures. Such employment should not be secured with any implicit or explicit expectation of benefit to the employer because of the individual's position at the Art Gallery.

Process

First draft, November 3, 2009 by Karol A. Lawson, Director, Art Collection and Galleries
 Comment & edits November/December 2009 by Jonathan Green, Dean of the faculty of the College
 Edits November 14 & 15, 2009 KL
 Comments by Jo Ellen Parker January 2010
 Comments by Heidi McCrory and development staff February-March 2010
 Copy sent for comment to Paul Davies 2/16/2010
 Edits by KL based on those comments and further input from Jonathan Green March 19, 2010
 OK by JEP 3-29-2010
 3-29-2010 sent for comment to:
 Chair, Art History Department (Witcombe)
 Chair, Studio Art Department (Monk)
 Edits 6-15-2010 by KL based on Monk & Witcombe feedback May & June 2010
 FOA officers (sent to FOA by KL summer of 2010, some minor comments returned—typos etc.)
 College's attorney (sent to counsel by JG summer of 2010)
 Counsel comments shared with KL spring 2011
 Highlights by KL answering counsel's comments for S. Shank 7-18-11
 Sent to AJM 8-4-2011
 AJM, SS, and KL review 10-4-2011; edits by KL based on that review 10-11-2011; OK'd by AJM & SS 11/18/11
 To C. Witcombe, T. Hamilton, and J. Monk for comment 11/18/11; no comments as of 12-5-2011