

Call for Papers

Is it Okay to Sell the Monet? Age of Deaccessioning in Museums

Edited by Julia Courtney, with contributing Editor, Katherine E. Lewis, Esq.

Invitation for submissions to be included in forthcoming book being published by Rowman & Littlefield in the Spring of 2018.

DEADLINES:

ABSTRACTS DUE: July 1, 2016

NOTIFICATION: by July 15, 2016

COMPLETED PAPERS: May 15, 2017

About the Publication: Just as Victorian Americans were the country's "great museum builders," today's museum professionals are charged with storing and caring for collections for future generations. Museums now face new concerns as their collections reach capacity, funding sources diminish and technology challenges them to reach beyond the physicality of the museum walls. Objects, paintings, specimens, textiles and ephemera, line museum shelves, walls and painting racks and digital works increasingly challenge museum resources, networks and servers. Museums must find creative solutions to assure the care and housing of the physical and digital objects that they hold.

In 1983, a study was conducted to determine the cost of "keeping" an object in a museum (Mychal Brown, in *Museums and the Disposals Debate*). It was determined that safe storage in a museum cost about \$50 per object (climate control and overhead—conservation, research and staffing were not taken into account). Given that this survey is more than 30 years old, and collections have expanded, the number would be drastically higher today, according to Brown. Rethinking of collections is the critical work of museums and these institutions need guidance in being strategic and open about this dilemma. Only then will creative ways of reevaluating collections surface, ensuring the survival of cultural institutions.

This publication will examine the various aspects of deaccessioning in the United States from a variety of perspectives including: Auction houses, legal perspective, museum perspective, collector/donor perspective and library/archive perspective. In examining this issue in depth, the publication would offer keys to understanding and approaching this complex issue and provide essential guidance in the museum field to assist with managing collections and the quest for refinement of collections.

The audience for this publication would include both emerging and experienced museum professionals, library/archive professionals, board members, professional museum associations, auction house professionals, private collectors and historians.

Call for Papers

We invite proposals in all areas of deaccessioning and encourage contributions that address both physical and digital collections objects. In addition to academic analysis, we welcome practitioners and professionals and encourage interdisciplinary research addressing the myriad of deaccessioning issues facing collecting institutions face in the United States.

Potential topics include but are not limited to:

The Context of the Debate

- Historical perspective, compare in depth to Victorian age, provide a history of de-accessioning in American Museums.

- Museum changes and how they may benefit society

The Mechanics of Disposal

- Negotiating the Private Sale
- The Role of the Auction House: The Museum Perspective/ The Auction House Perspective
- The Role of Museum Directors and Curators
- Digital Collections

The Use of Proceeds: Ethics and the Role of Professional Associations

- The History of the Ethical Rules, Do Sanctions Work?
- Flying Under the Radar: What Does Direct Care of the Collection Really Mean?
- Guilt by Association: Museum Directors on the Firing Line (How museum directors deal with decisions of their boards to ignore the ethical rule).

The Use of Proceeds: Law

- *Monetizing the Collection: The Intersection of Law, Ethics, and Trustee Prerogative* (M. Gold)
- When and How Does the Attorney General Get Involved
- *There's No Such Thing as Public Trust, and It's a Good Thing, Too* (D. Zaretsky)

Potential Case Studies – Case studies should reflect successful and challenging examples of deaccessioning and should include take-away “lessons learned” from the case. Some possibilities include:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| · National Academy | · Delaware Art Museum |
| · Randolph University | · Higgins Armory Museum |
| · Fresno Metropolitan Museum | · Brandeis University |
| · Fisk University | |

About the Editors: *Julia Hollett Courtney* has worked in the museum field for more than twenty years. She holds masters degrees in art/museum education (Lesley University, Cambridge, Massachusetts) and art history/museum studies (Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts). Courtney has served as curator of art for the Springfield Museums in Springfield, Massachusetts (Michele and Donald D’Amour Museum of Fine Arts and the George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum) since 2006. She has conducted scholarly research and written on the collection as well as researched organized and designed numerous exhibits that have received national and international attention. Courtney is the editor and an author of *The Legal Guide for Museum Professionals* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

Katherine E. Lewis, Esq. concentrates her practice in Information Technology, New Media, and Visual Arts and works with technology businesses, content developers, artists, writers, art foundations, museums, cultural organizations and not for profit organizations. Prior to joining Meister Seelig & Fein LLP, Ms. Lewis worked as an Attorney-Advisor in the Smithsonian Institution’s Office of Contracting, where she advised her clients in diverse matters including digital and new media, collections digitization, software and digital app development, licensing, artist commissioning, acquisitions and loan agreements. Ms. Lewis is Council Member of the American Bar Association’s Section of Science & Technology and Chair of the Museum and the Arts Law Committee. She is a frequent speaker for regional and national museum associations on legal issues facing museums, specifically as they relate to Intellectual Property and Information Technology and has published on these topics as well. Ms. Lewis was honored as a **2015 Rising Star** by the American Bar Association’s Section of Science & Technology Law (*The SciTech Lawyer*, Winter, 2015).

Submitting a proposal If you are interested in being considered as a contributor, please send an abstract (up to 250 words) and short biography to Julia Courtney at jcourtney@springfieldmuseums.org by **July 1, 2016**. Contributors will receive a complimentary copy of the publication. The book will be printed in soft and hard cover formats during the spring of 2018.