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CREATIVE ECONOMY AND THE ARTS / OFTA / CREATIVE INDUSTRIES / ARTBANK

Artbank Collection Management

Deaccession Policy

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Artbank Collection Deaccession Policy

Artbank is an Australian Government initiative within the Department of Communications and the Arts. Established in 1980, Artbank is an arts support program for Australian contemporary artists that encourages engagement with and appreciation of Australian contemporary art by the broader community. With a collection of over 10,000 artworks in a variety of artistic modes, media and styles, Artbank provides direct support to living Australian artists through the acquisition of their work; and promotes the value of Australian contemporary art by making this work available through an art leasing scheme.

Purpose

The Artbank Collection Deaccession Policy presents the rationale for the deaccession of artwork from the Artbank Collection.

An artwork should be held in the Artbank Collection if it is consistent with the purposes of Artbank and if it continues to be of significance and is able to be appropriately utilised and protected. When these standards are no longer met deaccessioning may be considered as a course of action.

Deaccessioning is part of collection management and is the formal process of the removal of an artwork from the collection. Deaccessioning and disposing of artwork from the Artbank Collection is an important part of the management and care of a collection. In deaccessioning, Artbank ensures the integrity and long-term quality of the Artbank Collection and acts within best practice industry standards and procedures. The Artbank Collection Deaccession Policy supports the [Artbank Collection Acquisition Policy](#).

Collection Dynamics

Artbank is a lending collection and collected works are there for a purpose that requires broad public access. Although all due care and collection management will be afforded, the leasing scheme places more pressure on holdings than a museum or gallery setting.

Accountable Authority

The authority to deaccession artwork from the Artbank Collection sits with the Secretary of the Department of Communications and the Arts or their authorised delegate.

Objectives

Artbank has two primary objectives:

- to encourage the development of Australian contemporary art through the acquisition of the work of living Australian artists; and
- to promote the value of Australian contemporary art to the broader community by making this art accessible through an art leasing scheme.

The Artbank Collection Deaccession Policy supports these objectives by ensuring the Artbank Collection continues to evolve, remain contemporary and deliver on its core objectives while remaining safe and accessible.

Criteria for Deaccession

Artbank applies five eligibility criteria for the consideration of the deaccessioning of art works from the Artbank Collection. Eligibility under one or more of the criteria is required to action the deaccession process.

1. Physical Condition

The artwork is no longer deemed appropriate for leasing through the Artbank art leasing scheme due to its physical condition, such as being too fragile, deteriorating at a rapid rate, being damaged beyond restoration, having become hazardous and being beyond Artbank's current and future capacity to document, care, store, and conserve.

2. Redundancy

The artist's work is over-represented in the Artbank Collection by more suitable examples and/or there is duplication and the Artbank Collection holds multiple editions of the same work or works in better condition.

3. High and Low Cultural Significance

The cultural significance and market value of the artwork is deemed too great for the risk of loss or damage to be deemed acceptable to be leased through the Artbank art leasing scheme. Deaccession may also be considered if the artwork is considered of low cultural significance and a superior or more suitable example of the artist's work becomes available to Artbank.

Artbank will not base any deaccessioning decision on current trends or on the basis of personal taste. In the event an artwork has not being leased through the Artbank art leasing scheme for over 10 years it is not automatically considered of high or low cultural significance. In these circumstances Artbank will attempt to generate interest from clients by reviewing leasing fees and ensuring greater visibility before considering deaccession against each of the five criteria listed in this policy.

4. Offensive Content

Artbank determines a work of art is or has become inappropriate for display in public spaces because of offensive content.

5. Illegitimate Possession

Artbank has reason to suspect that the artwork has been falsely documented, described or attributed. Or the ownership is the subject of a substantiated request for return by the owner, the legality of which is recognised by Artbank.

Methods of Deaccession

Deaccessioned Artbank works are disposed of through sale, donation or limited transfer or exchange arrangements. This includes liaising with other Commonwealth or State or Territory collecting institutions when the artwork is deaccessioned due to the description listed under Significance.

Where possible the interests of the artist or the artist's estate will be considered as part of the deaccession process. Controlled destruction is only applied when the artwork is damaged beyond repair or has become hazardous. In this event every effort will be made to inform the artist of the decision.

With the exception of artwork damaged beyond repair or hazardous materials, the deaccession proposal will enter into a no action period before any decision is finalised to enable any new additional research or consultation to be actioned.

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Under no circumstances will a deaccessioned artwork be purchased by or transferred or given knowingly to any current or past employee of Artbank or their immediate families.

Work acquired through donation under the Cultural Gift Program (CGP) will not be returned or transferred to the donor as part of the deaccession process.

Documentation

All deaccessioned artwork will be approved, documented fully, clearly justified, disposed of appropriately, and be free from problems of ownership, conflict of interest, and legal issue.

On completion of the deaccessioning and disposal process Artbank registers and files are amended to note the deaccessioning and disposal of the work, and copies of photographic and written records pertaining to the work shall be retained by Artbank including the deaccession report. The artwork's accession number shall not be reassigned.

Artbank will publish details pertaining to each deaccessioned artwork during the preceding year on the Artbank website.

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