

The Walters Art Museum Outgoing Loan Policy

September 2008

1. PREAMBLE

1.1 This policy statement defines the process of decisionmaking for lending Walters Art Museum collection objects and the procedures to be followed.

1.2 The Baltimore City Code, Article 18, Subtitle 14-11(b), stipulates:

“Objects of art owned by the Walters Art Gallery may be loaned to or exhibited in any other institution without the approval of the Mayor and City Council. However, the Trustees must provide notice of any loan or exhibition to the Mayor and City Council of Baltimore and the Board of Estimates of Baltimore City.”

1.3 The policy is guided by:

- The American Association of Museums (AAM), “Code of Ethics for Museums,” as adopted by the AAM’s Board of Directors in 2000.
- The American Association of Museums (AAM) – Registrars Committee of the American Association of Museums (RCAAM): Code of Practice for Couriers of Museum Objects, 1986.
- Baltimore City Code

2. PRINCIPLES

The following principles will be used in considering and handling loans:

2.1 Generally, loans of works of art from the permanent collection to other museums are intended to foster new perceptions of the works--and thus to enhance knowledge and understanding of the works--by presenting them in a context in which they are not normally seen.

2.2 Long-term loans of reserve material (materials in storage) may be considered in the case of institutions with educational missions whose educational programs would benefit significantly from the presence of such works of art and whose facilities meet the required environmental, security, and professional standards.

- 2.3 In general, a period of twelve months is required to process loans in consideration of the demands such requests place on the Registrars Department, the Curatorial and Conservation Divisions. On rare occasions, the twelve month requirement may be waived if the schedule of Registrar's Department, Curatorial and Conservation Divisions permits.
- 2.4 The total number of loans to be approved in any given fiscal year will be "budgeted" in consultation with the Director.
- 2.5 The Registrar's Department in the Division of Exhibitions and Collections Management is responsible for processing all loan requests as well as handling coordination, documentation, and shipment of approved loans.
- 2.6 Processing of loan requests must be reviewed by the Registrar's Department, Curatorial and Conservation Divisions, the Loans and Acquisitions Committee, and the Director.

The safety and preservation of an object proposed for loan must be the primary consideration. An object must be in stable condition and able to withstand handling and transportation during a loan period. Borrowers must be able to meet the Museum's environmental, security, and professional standards for the works of art requested for loan.

- 2.7 The Board of Trustees is responsible for final approval of all loan requests.
- 2.8 The borrower shall be responsible for all costs related to the loan including an administrative loan fee and any expenses incurred in conserving, preparing, packing (including labor costs), crating, and shipping, and couriering the loan.

3. PROCEDURES

- 3.1 A formal, written loan request from a borrower may be addressed to the Director, curator, or registrar.
- 3.2 The registrar is responsible for acknowledging the loan request letter. In order to begin the review process, the registrar will obtain from the borrower, if not already provided, information about the scope of the exhibition, the dates and schedule of venues, current facilities reports, and hygrothermograph charts for each exhibition venue. The registrar will examine the loan request in light of the exhibition and loan schedules, the ability to properly manage, pack, and ship the loan (given other commitments and responsibilities), the borrower's facilities, and insurance coverage.
- 3.3 The appropriate curator shall review and evaluate the loan request, taking into consideration each of the following criteria:

- the scholarly importance of the exhibition and its catalogue
- the importance of the object to the exhibition and to exhibition visitors
- the overall condition of the object and its loan history
- the potential for building loan equity with the requesting institution
- the impact that the absence of the object might have on the Walters' permanent installations, exhibition needs, education programs, and visitors' experience

The curator shall submit a brief written recommendation to the registrar, addressing these issues. Loans supported by the curator will be advanced to the Loans and Acquisitions Committee. All recommendations (whether to grant or deny the loan request) must be in the hands of the Chief Registrar no less than one week before the request is to be reviewed by the Loans and Acquisitions Committee.

- 3.4 Loan requests are then presented for discussion to the Loans and Acquisitions Committee, which comprises the Director of the Curatorial Division, Curators, the Chief Registrar, the Associate Registrar for Loans and Exhibitions, and Director for Conservation and Technical Research or an appointed representative of the Conservation Division, the Associate Director for Collections and Exhibitions, and the Director (when available). Should the Committee decide against making the loan, the loan will be denied and the Director will be apprised of the denial. Only the Director can override the Committee's decision.
- 3.5 Loans requests considered to have merit by the Loans and Acquisitions Committee shall be forwarded to the Conservation Division for examination of the object. The appropriate conservator shall prepare a report consisting of an overall loan recommendation (loan requirements for mounts, framing, packing and crating specifications, environment and light requirements), condition notes, recommended treatment, handling, shipping and courier requirements. Works deemed unstable will not be recommended for loan by the Conservation Division.
- 3.6 Loans approved for travel by the Conservation Division shall be discussed again at the Loans and Acquisitions Committee meeting and a final recommendation made to the Director of the Curatorial Division, who will present the recommendation to the Director. The appropriate curator will provide a current valuation for insurance purposes. In the event that the Curatorial and Conservation Divisions are unable to reach consensus, the opposing written recommendations will be forwarded to the Director for review. The Director may determine that special circumstances justify

lending a work of art not recommended for loan by the Committee. Only the Director can override the Committee's decision.

3.7 The Director shall review the loan recommendations of the Loans and Acquisitions Committee and include the Committee's recommendations in the agenda for periodic meetings of the Board of Trustees. Each loan listing shall indicate that the appropriate curator, the Conservation Division, and the Director support the recommendation. The Trustees shall be advised of any conservation and/or curatorial concerns. The final decision resides with the Board of Trustees. Notification to the Mayor and the City Council of Baltimore of outgoing loans (see section 1.2 above) occurs at the time of the Board of Trustees meeting by virtue of a representative of the Mayor and a member of the City Council of Baltimore sitting on the Board, and in writing through the distribution of the minutes.

3.8 Requests from borrowers to extend a loan to include additional venues will be reviewed in the same manner as the original loan request and must be approved by the Board of Trustees. Every effort will be made on the part of the Registrar's Department to obtain all venue information before requesting initial Board approval.

In the event that a long-term loan from the Walters collection pursuant to Section 2.1 is approved by the Board of Trustees, subsequent loan renewals may be approved by the Registrar's Department in consultation with the appropriate curator, the Director of the Curatorial Division, and the Conservation Division.

3.9 The Director of the Curatorial Division shall notify borrowers of loans that have not been approved by the Loans and Acquisitions Committee.

The Registrar's Department shall notify the borrower if particular objects in a loan request are denied at the beginning of the loan review process.

3.10 The Registrar's Department shall notify the borrower of the approval of its loan request by the Board of Trustees. Should the loan not be approved, the Director of the Curatorial Division will notify the borrower.

3.11 The Registrar's Department shall be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the loan schedule, including deinstallation, conservation (if necessary), photography, condition reports, packing, and shipping.

3.12 Curators are responsible for making recommendations for replacement objects in the permanent installation, where appropriate, and arranging for treatment and installation of selected replacements. The treatment and installation of replacement objects is subject to the schedules and commitments of the Registrar's Department and Conservation staff.

- 3.13 The Registrar's Department is responsible for working with the borrower on the completion of the Walters' Conditions Governing Outgoing Loans, and Loan Agreements. These documents will include special loan requirements such as light levels, climate specifications, casework requirements, handling restrictions, security levels, insurance coverage, and courier stipulations. Information about administrative fees, estimated handling, conservation, packing, crating, labor, photography, courier and shipping costs will be conveyed to the borrower.

The Registrar's Department shall oversee packing, shipping, and courier logistics.

- 3.14 The Registrar's Department shall negotiate and arrange for proper insurance coverage. Borrowers with insurance comparable to that carried by the Walters will be asked to insure loans. A certificate of insurance is required before the loan will be released for shipment. The Registrar's Department will review the insurance policies and/or indemnities used by international borrowers to ascertain whether insurance will be maintained by the Walters Art Museum or by the borrower.

- 3.15 The Registrar's Department shall track the progress of the loan from its departure through its return to the Walters and will oversee all intervenue exhibition arrangements. Security shall be notified of all objects leaving and entering the museum. Unpacking and condition reporting shall be the responsibility of the Registrar's Department in consultation with the Conservation Division. In consultation with the appropriate curator, the Registrar's Department shall arrange for the returned loan to be placed on exhibition or housed in storage.

- 3.14 All records will be updated and the loan file archived on return of the object.

The minutes of the Board of Trustees' meeting and the Walters' Annual Report are the formal records of all loans.

4. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed on a periodic basis and at least once every five years.