

DEACCESSION

Acquisitions are made with the intention of building the Museum's collections and preserving them for future use in exhibitions and for teaching and research. Objects accessioned into the collections will be permanently retained provided they continue to support the mission of the Museum. The Museum may choose to deaccession, or remove from the collections, any object which it legally owns that, upon examination, is deemed to be inappropriate for further retention.

Once an object has been accessioned into the Museum's Collections, it can only be removed through completion of the deaccession process. The act of deaccessioning presupposes that the object has been formally accessioned. Property abandoned in the Museum is subject to Massachusetts General Law Part II, Chapter 200B, Disposition of Museum Property. In accordance with that law, the Museum may request the withdrawal of any property deposited in the Museum, by written notice directed to the depositor if known. Failure to remove property from the Museum following a valid provision of notice may result in the depositor's loss of title.

The same degree of careful examination and documentation shall go into making decisions regarding the deaccessioning of objects as is given to the evaluation of potential acquisitions.

DEACCESSION DECISIONS

Decisions as to the appropriateness of proposed deaccessions are made as follows:

For objects from the Permanent Collections, a recommendation is made by MIT Museum's Collections Committee, operating in accordance with its Bylaws, to the Director, who, taking into account the Committee's recommendation, makes the final decision as to whether the object should or should not be removed from the collections.

DEACCESSION CRITERIA

To be considered for deaccessioning, an object must meet at least one of the following criteria:

Relevance: inclusion of the object in the collections does not support the Museum's mission or fit within its stated collecting goals.

Condition: the object has deteriorated or been damaged beyond repair or poses a health hazard.

Care of the Object: the Museum is not able to provide proper care for special preservation requirements associated with the object.

Duplication: the object is an exact duplicate or unnecessarily duplicates the subject matter or relevance of another object.

Authenticity: the object is found to be falsely attributed or documented, or proved to be a fake or forgery.

Quality of the Collection: deaccessioning of the object will improve or strengthen another area of the collections and, in so doing, further the goals of the Museum. In this case, great care must be taken to ensure that an object in one area of the collection is not disposed of purely for the sake of acquiring an object in another area.

No action pertaining to the deaccessioning or disposition of an object will be undertaken that would impair the integrity and good standing of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or MIT Museum within the community at large or within the museum profession.

DISPOSITION OF DEACCESSIONED OBJECTS

Disposition of deaccessioned objects will be carried out in accordance with any local, state, and federal regulations and legal requirements, and in accordance with the policies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Members of the MIT community (employees, alumni and affiliates), members of the MIT Museum Advisory Board and Collections Committee, and their immediate family members may not purchase or otherwise benefit from the disposition of a deaccessioned object.

When deemed necessary by the Director, an outside appraisal or qualified consultation shall be obtained to assist in determining the appropriate disposition method.

Any disposition restrictions placed on an object by a donor will be strictly observed. If the object was a gift or bequest, donors or their heirs will be notified, when possible, of the Museum's intention to deaccession the object. Such notification is carried out as a courtesy and does not constitute a request for permission to dispose of the object, nor shall a donor be given preferential treatment in reacquiring the object.

The method of disposition must be approved by the Director and documented in the Disposal Record. Disposition of approved deaccessions shall take place in a timely fashion. In determining the appropriate method of disposition, consideration should be given to the best interests of the Museum, the public and scholarly communities it serves, and the public trust it represents. Appropriate methods of disposition are:

Donation: the object may be donated to another repository or educational organization.

Institute Transfer: the object may be transferred to the custody of another academic or administrative office at MIT.

Exchange: the object may be exchanged with another repository, educational organization, or academic or administrative office at MIT.

Sale: the object may be sold at public auction or sold privately to another educational organization.

Destruction: if an object has deteriorated or been damaged beyond repair, poses a health hazard, is determined to be a fake or forgery, or holds neither intrinsic nor monetary value, it may be deliberately destroyed.

The Museum will place all net proceeds (all proceeds less out-of-pocket expenses) from the sale of deaccessioned objects into its Collection fund. This restricted fund will be used solely for the acquisition of objects for the Museum's collections or for the direct care of collections, which is defined as the conservation of collections objects or the improvement of collections storage facilities.

A Deaccession Recommendation and Disposition Record will be completed for all deaccessions and retained permanently in the Deaccession file kept in the Registrar's Office. The Registrar will provide a report on deaccession actions at the close of the fiscal year.