

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A MUSEUM ARTIFACT:

Acquisition	<p>When the Museum formally acquires an artifact for the collection, known as accessioning, the Museum is in fact agreeing to preserve that object for the benefit of the public in perpetuity, inasmuch as that is possible. Because of the Museum's limited resources, not all items available to the Museum can be accepted without jeopardizing the Museum's ability to preserve them adequately. Therefore only those objects which meet the parameters of the Museum's collection policy, are not duplicated by existing artifacts in the collection, are in an adequate physical condition to be meaningful to the public and for which the Museum can provide reasonable care are accepted.</p> <p>More than 95% of the Museum's acquisitions are donations from the public. As required however, the Museum does purchase rare and significant artifacts which cannot be acquired through donation.</p>
Accession	<p>The formal acceptance of the object into the collection which includes documentation of the legal transfer of ownership to the Museum either through a signature on the gift form or a purchase receipt. An accession number is assigned and affixed to the item in order to link all written and computer records with the object.</p>
Cataloguing	<p>Documentation of the artifact's provenance and past history as well as its life cycle in the Museum. A complete physical description is recorded along with any historical information from the donor or reference sources regarding the origin, use and significance of the item are included. A condition report is also completed at this stage to provide a bench mark of the artifact's physical condition when it entered the Museum and also to identify any special conservation concerns for storage or use of the artifact.</p>
Storage	<p>Conservation or safekeeping of the artifact in the best environment possible to enhance preservation. Special attention is paid to environmental conditions which contribute to deterioration such as ultraviolet light intensity, humidity levels, fluctuations in temperature, dust, mould, toxic or corrosive fumes, insect infestations, physical support and the stability of that support, pest control and security. A storage location is chosen which provides the best environment for the specific artifact and this location is recorded to facilitate the location of the item whenever required.</p>
Conservation	<p>Ongoing monitoring and intervention when necessary. This includes regular monitoring of the environmental conditions in storage areas and exhibition galleries; inspection, examination and documentation of individual artifacts to assess changes in physical condition; housekeeping, cleaning and maintenance; and, when necessary and feasible, conservation treatments by staff or a professional conservator.</p>
Exhibition	<p>The public display of artifacts. Artifacts which best illustrate and relate to the chosen exhibit theme are chosen for consideration. Only those artifacts however, whose condition is adequate to withstand exposure and display will be included in the exhibit</p>
Evaluation	<p>Given the realistic limitations of the Museum's resources, an artifact's contribution to the collection is reviewed from time to time in order to ensure that the Museum's resources are being allocated in a manner which best fulfils its mandate as specified in the Statement of Purpose and Collection Policy. If it is determined that the artifact no longer meets the criteria of the Collection Policy, it is deaccessioned and formally removed from the collection.</p>