



EMORY

MICHAEL C.
CARLOS
MUSEUM

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“Central to the Carlos Museum's mission is the thorough research and documentation of each work of art in the permanent collection to determine its historical and social context and provenance.”

The Michael C. Carlos Museum's mission is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret art and artifacts from antiquity to the present in order to provide unique opportunities for education and enrichment in the community and to promote interdisciplinary teaching and research at Emory University. The permanent collection of a museum is the core of its identity; it provides the foundation for its research, exhibitions, and educational outreach. The Carlos Museum strengthens its ability to serve its audiences by making acquisitions of art and artifacts for its permanent collection through gift, bequests, or purchases.

Many factors contribute to a work's suitability for acquisition, including artistic quality, intellectual appeal, historical importance, attributes which foster understanding of a particular culture or artistic movement, and, above all, a credible provenance, or history of ownership.

Central to the Carlos Museum's mission is the thorough research and documentation of each work of art in the permanent collection to determine its historical and social context and provenance. Museum scholars and curators carefully research each proposed acquisition. Works must have a history of documentation in order to follow the Museum's collecting guidelines of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on Cultural Property, adopted into law by the United States in 1983. That legislation, which informs the Carlos' collecting policy, dictates that works must have been exported from their countries of origin prior to 1983 or be accompanied by a valid export license from their countries of origin. The Museum will not knowingly acquire any object which has been illegally exported from its country of origin or illegally imported into the United States. Any object surrounded by the suggestion of being illegitimate will not be acquired. Additionally, the Museum does not acquire objects that it has reason to believe were obtained by seizure during times of war.

As an accredited member of the American Association of Museums since 1991, the Carlos Museum is not alone in embracing these standards-- all museums of the Carlos Museum's stature follow similar collecting policies. Acquisitions are not treasures to be collected like trophies. Each object is a window to the past and a pathway into a culture. Through art and artifacts, we learn more about the people and their beliefs and explore these ideas in the context of our lives today. The growth of the permanent collection in size and quality enables the Museum to realize its mission of sharing these cultures with the widest audience possible.

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