

National Model Aviation Museum Policy for the Management of the Permanent Collections

MISSION OF THE ACADEMY OF MODEL AERONAUTICS

The Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) is a world-class association of modelers organized for the purpose of promotion, development, education, advancement, and safeguarding of modeling activities.

The Academy provides leadership, organization, competition, communication, protection, representation, recognition, education, and scientific/technical development to modelers.

MISSION OF THE NATIONAL MODEL AVIATION MUSEUM (Museum)

The Museum and library is dedicated to collecting and preserving significant pieces of aeromodeling history in order to inspire a broad and passionate understanding of the historic, scientific, technical, and artistic legacy of model aviation, creating learning opportunities that stimulate the imagination, and encourage visitors to become actively involved in the world of aeromodeling.

STRUCTURE

The Academy of Model Aeronautics' National Model Aviation Museum seeks to preserve the significant artifacts and ephemera that provide a physical record of the history of aeromodeling. The objects are collected, acquired, accessioned, and cared for as part of the Museum's Permanent Collection. The Policy for the Management of the Permanent Collection (Collections Policy) directs the care of these objects.

The Collection Policy is supported by written procedures that detail specifics of the care, documentation, and use of the Permanent Collection. We strive to make certain that both documents, and all work done with the Permanent Collection, are in accordance with recognized professional standards and ethics.

The Collection Policy applies to the entire Permanent Collection, anyone who works with or has access to the Permanent Collection in any capacity, and any situation in which the Permanent Collection may be placed.

KEY PERSONNEL

COLLECTIONS STAFF

The paid Collections Staff consists of the Museum Collections Manager and the Museum Director, with the assistance of the Archivist & Assistant Historian. The Museum may add additional Collections Staff in the future.

VOLUNTEERS

Collection volunteers will be recruited at the discretion of the Collections Staff. Collections Volunteers assist the Collections Staff in performing daily tasks and assist in completing large projects relating to collections care, exhibit work, and research.

ACQUISITION COMMITTEE

The Acquisitions Committee is composed of volunteers appointed by the President of the AMA. The Acquisition Committee will meet quarterly to accept/decline potential donations referred by the Collections Staff, counsel the Collections staff as needed, and approve/disapprove recommendations for items to be deaccessioned. Decisions by the Committee are made through a simple majority vote.

COLLECTIONS SCOPE

The Museum's Permanent Collection consists of artifacts that meet strict standards of appropriateness and authenticity. These objects were legally acquired and belong to the Museum. Approved artifacts are added to the Permanent Collection by a process called accessioning. By accessioning an artifact, the Museum accepts the responsibility, as an institution in the public's trust, to store and care for the object in perpetuity.

The artifacts in the Permanent Collection tell the stories of model aviation, its technological achievements, the social culture developed around the hobby, and model aviation's involvement in wider history and culture.

To be eligible for inclusion in the Permanent Collection, models and aeromodeling artifacts must demonstrate one or more of the following qualities:

1. Be *the* one-of-a-kind item representing an important breakthrough or achievement in design, construction, applied technology, scientific innovation, or competitive success.
2. Illustrate the impact of significant breakthroughs or achievements in design, construction, applied technology, scientific innovation, or competitive success.
3. Illustrate the history of various types of competition within model aviation. More specifically, demonstrate how competition rules and regulations have developed and changed in reaction to changing technologies and circumstances.
4. Represent the continuum of technological development and design of a particular manufacturer, or equipment type.
5. Showcase the camaraderie of modelers, the importance of model aviation as a hobby, and the role of model aviation in the lives of modelers.
6. Document the history of the Academy of Model Aeronautics as an organization.
7. Illustrate model aviation's influence on full-scale aviation research and design, as well as model aviation's impact on how the general public understands aviation and its uses.

DOCUMENTATION

Documenting the Permanent Collection is vital to the use, care, and existence of the objects in the collection. Such documentation answers questions regarding the object's original owner, the object's use, how it came to be in the Museum, its current legal status, and all the actions that have been taken regarding the object while in the Permanent Collection.

As the Permanent Collection is being cared for in perpetuity, so must the documentation be maintained in a permanent, orderly, and accessible manner. It is the responsibility of the Museum Collections Manager to complete and maintain said documentation.

HOW THE MUSEUM COLLECTS

DONATIONS

Donations are the primary method of growing the Permanent Collection. All potential donations to the Museum must be accepted and approved by Collections Staff or the Acquisition Committee before being acquired by the Museum, and accessioned into the Permanent Collection. Donations to the Museum must include a Deed of Gift signed by the donor relinquishing all claims to the object. The donor will handle all tax matters dealing with donations.

Collections Staff can accept or decline into the Permanent Collection aeromodeling memorabilia, kits, flight and radio equipment, model aircraft engines, and related aviation history items. These decisions can be made as the donations are offered, after consulting other Collections Staff, other AMA staff, and/or subject matter experts.

The Acquisition Committee can accept or decline into the Permanent Collection all model aircraft, completed exhibits/displays and anything the Collections Staff feels is unusual or in need of the Committee's review. Collections Staff will provide the Committee with necessary relevant information, and may offer recommendations as to the object's desirability to the Permanent Collection.

All decisions to accept or decline an offered donation must be in accordance with the collections scope and the policy regarding donations.

When a dispute or complaints arise, the Acquisitions Committee is the final authority regarding approval/disapproval of objects recommended for donation.

Decisions to decline donations

It is impossible for the Museum to accept everything. The decision to decline a donation should not be made lightly, and should be influenced by the Museum's mission, its collection scope and its resources. A donation will be declined if any of the following occur:

1. Legal questions – The Museum will not accept items if the potential donor is misrepresenting him- or herself about being the legal owner of the artifact, and/or if

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the items have been stolen, or faked. The Museum does not accept human remains, objects subject to Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora enforcement, or the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. All international, state, federal and local laws will be followed, including acting in the spirit of the law if it is not directly applicable.

2. Safety reasons – The Museum will not accept objects infested (with mold, insects, etc.), contain hazardous material, or are defective, in poor condition, unstable or un-repairable. Collections Staff will judge the object's condition and may decline something based on the condition even after initial acceptance was given. The Museum does not collect ammunition or firearms of any type.
3. Provenance and History – The Museum will not accept objects with no connection to model aviation, or which pertain more to the history of full-scale aviation rather than model aviation. (As an aside, this does not apply to books, printed material and documents.) Objects which lack adequate provenance or anecdotal evidence regarding the object's creation, use, and ownership history will also not be accepted.
4. Existing Collection – The Museum will try not to accept artifacts that are duplicates of artifacts already represented in the Permanent Collection, or if the time period/manufacturer/event etc. it represents is well documented in the collection. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis by the appropriate party.
5. Restrictions and Conditions – The Museum will not accept any donation or gift that has conditions or restrictions on its acceptance or future use. Conditions include, but are not limited to, being on permanent exhibit or being returned to the donor if not on exhibit.

Other notes regarding donations:

The Museum does not accept responsibility for unsolicited items that are mailed to the Museum, left "on the doorstep" or at the front desk without prior approval of Collections Staff or Acquisition Committee. Such items will be considered unrestricted gifts to the Museum, and may be discarded.

Due to conflicts of interest, Museum staff will not give monetary appraisals of any sort to donors, potential donors or other outside parties. Staff opinions on identity, date or other attributes are personal opinion only, and may not be used for monetary benefit of the owner.

FOUND IN COLLECTIONS

The Museum began collecting in 1978. Early record keeping was not uniformly accurate or sufficient; therefore, the Museum has a large number of artifacts in its possession that are not associated with known records. Every effort should be made to identify these objects and associate them with records. For those objects that are deemed unnecessary for the Permanent Collection and no provenance nor information can be found, they shall be submitted to the Steering Committee for approval to remove them from the Museum (see DEACCESSION

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section of this document). Those objects that are deemed appropriate for the collection will be accessioned as a grouping each year.

COLLECTED BY STAFF

Objects that are used or acquired by AMA staff while working on AMA time may be added to the Permanent Collection as “Collected by Staff” at the discretion of Collections Staff. As they already belong to the AMA, they will be transferred to the Museum department and accessioned under a grouping each year.

PURCHASE

The Museum rarely purchases items for the Permanent Collection. Decisions to purchase items are made by the Collections Staff, with the counsel of the AMA Executive Director and the Comptroller. Decisions to purchase objects should be made after reviewing the object(s), the need for it in the collection, its price and the funds available, and the possibility of having similar objects offered for donation at a later date. Amounts spent on the purchase of artifacts must be approved as per the AMA’s financial policies. The items will be accessioned as a grouping each year.

MADE FOR THE COLLECTION

Due to the nature of model aviation as a hobby, it is often necessary to build reproductions of models for exhibition and research. The Collections Staff, in discussion with the Acquisition Committee, makes the decision to have models built. Reproducing models should only occur after ascertaining that there is not an existing version that is suitable. Extensive research should be done into the model’s design and history, and appropriate building techniques and equipment used. The completed items will be accessioned as a grouping each year.

AMA COLLECTION

Objects in the AMA Collection are those created and used by the AMA staff for events, promotions and the work of the AMA, both in the past and present. As they already belong to the AMA they are transferred to the Museum department and will be accessioned as a group each year.

PERMANENT COLLECTION USE AND CARE

The Permanent Collection exists for three reasons:

1. To be preserved so that future generations will come to understand the historic, scientific, technical, and artistic legacy of model aviation.
2. To create learning opportunities, through research, exhibits and programs, that stimulates the imagination.
3. To encourage visitors to become actively involved in model aviation.

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These reasons are often at odds. It is the role of the Collections Staff to thoughtfully mediate between preservation and use in such a way that benefits the current generation, future generations, and the object itself. These day to day decisions regarding the management and care of the Permanent Collection are the responsibility and authority of Collections Staff.

Objects will be placed on exhibit and used in programming to the extent that their condition allows. However, objects will not be used for non-mission related programming or simple display in personal offices or at off-site locations. Whether on exhibit or in storage, the environmental conditions, object handling and all other factors of preservation should be in accordance with established museum industry standards.

ACCESS

Members of the AMA and the general public may have access to the collections and collection records through the exhibits and by appointment. Appointment requests must be submitted in advance, and a collection staff member must be present during the entire appointment. Access to individual artifacts may be denied due to the artifact's condition, its placement on exhibit or other factors. Collection records will be screened to protect donor privacy and information deemed restricted by Collections Staff.

If the researcher intends to make a profit from the information learned through the Museum's collections and information, a fee may be charged for the time spent researching; Collections Staff must approve any photographs published, and appropriate citation must be given to the Museum for information contributed.

For researchers and visitors who learn and photograph without any intention of profit, we ask that appropriate thanks or citation should go to the Museum for any photographs shared through digital or print media.

LOANS

The Museum accepts incoming loans and permits outgoing loans to enhance exhibits, for research purposes, conservation treatments, and to expand the presence of and appreciation for model aviation.

The Museum Director is responsible for accepting or denying both incoming and outgoing loans. This decision is made with the advice and counsel of the Museum Collections Manager, other AMA staff and/or subject matter experts.

Incoming loans will only be accepted for specific purposes, and specific timeframes. The Museum will take responsibility for the loaned objects for the allotted time, and will care for it as it does its own Permanent Collection, including carrying insurance coverage and paying all associated costs, including packing and shipping, (unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties). Expired loans that are still present on the Museum property 30 days after the last of three written attempts to arrange for return of said property will be regarded as abandoned property, and Indiana abandoned property laws will apply.

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Outgoing loans will only be granted to non-profit institutions in good standing, and which have controls for environmental and security monitoring (the level of which will be determined on a case-by-case basis). Loans will only be for a specific purpose and specific timeframe. The institution must show how the loan will benefit their organization and the general public. Decisions to loan objects will be based on the appropriateness of the loan, condition of the object, and the loan's benefit to both institutions. The borrowing institution is responsible for the objects while in their care, including carrying insurance coverage and paying all associated costs, including packing and shipping, (unless otherwise agreed upon by all parties).

Loans may be renewed beyond the original return date, as long as an updated return date is clearly set. The National Model Aviation Museum may terminate any loan agreement with two weeks written notice.

DEACCESSION

From time to time objects may need to be removed from the Permanent Collection through a process called deaccessioning. Deaccessioning offers current and future Collections Staff the flexibility to care for the objects in the best manner possible, and to better tell the story of model aviation. Much thought and research must go into the decision to deaccession an object.

Collections Staff are responsible for recommending artifacts to the Acquisition Committee to deaccession. The Acquisition Committee will review the objects and recommend to the Museum Steering Committee objects to be deaccessioned. Authority to deaccession an artifact is the responsibility of the Museum Steering Committee.

Artifacts that are deemed a threat to the collection, or the health of staff and volunteers will be removed and restricted from the Permanent Collection immediately by Collections Staff. Members of the Museum Steering Committee and the Acquisition Committee will be immediately notified of this action, and the Steering Committee asked to vote on its deaccession. If a vote is not held within 5 business days of the object's removal, the object will be deaccessioned.

The following criteria can be used to determine what to deaccession.

1. The condition of the object is a threat to staff, visitors and the collection (infested with mold, pests, etc.). Or, the condition of the object is unstable and beyond repair.
2. Those objects are non-sanctioned duplicates, forgeries, are counterfeit, or are not original or authentic.
3. There is little knowledge of the provenance of the object, or documentation lacking as to its history and use.
4. There are example(s) of similar objects in the collection, and further duplicates are not needed.
5. The collections scope and mission of the Museum changed to the point where the object no longer meets the listed criteria.

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6. If the object was inappropriately acquired (the object was stolen, looted or is overseen by existing or new laws, such as CITES and NAGPRA) then the object may be restored to its legal owner.

Once an object is deaccessioned it can be: (Listed in order of preference)

1. Used in the Museum's Education Collection.
2. Transferred to another non-profit institution. This should always be attempted before the item is sold or, if the condition warrants, destroyed.
3. Sold through a public sale. Public sales can be through an auction house, or online via E-bay or similar auction site. Items should not be sold via classified ads in magazines or discussion groups. The name of the seller should be restricted, and the AMA or Museum not publically connected to the sale. The item should be sold at a fair market value, and all monies collected from these sales will be directly used for care of the Permanent Collection and not as general income for the AMA or the Museum department.
4. Destroyed. Objects may be destroyed if the condition is such that destroying it is the only safe option, or if the object has not been claimed by another non-profit or sold.

It is the decision of the Collections Staff, with advice from the Acquisition Committee, on how to remove the item from the AMA's possession once it has been deaccessioned.

Ethical and Legal Considerations for De-accessioning

1. No deaccessioned object may be acquired by any AMA employee, Museum Steering Committee member, Acquisition Committee member, member of the AMA Executive Council, volunteer, or by their representatives, except through public sale.
2. Before recommending an object for deaccessioning, the Collections Staff shall be responsible to verify that the AMA has legal ownership to the item and that there are no restrictions or title questions that would impede deaccessioning.
3. If documented restrictions have been placed on the disposal of an item, they should, except in the case of hazardous material, be strictly observed.
4. When necessary, the Collections Staff will seek legal advice in actions involving restrictions and de-accessions.
5. No act of deaccessioning shall conflict with county, state or federal laws, or with the ethical principles established for the Museum in this or any other official document.

APPROVAL

The Museum Steering Committee is responsible for the approval of this policy, as well as any updates or changes that are deemed necessary for the future.