

Conservation Policy



Section	Date	By-Law Number	Page	Of
The Muse	June 21, 2023	69-2023	1	5
Subsection	Repeals By-Law Number		Policy Number	
Conservation	N/A		MU-01-09	

Definitions:

Conservation is the application of science to the examination, maintenance, and treatment of artifacts, artwork and archival material. Its principal aim is to stabilize artifacts, artwork, and archival material in their present state. It encompasses both preventative conservation and conservation treatment.

Preventative Conservation consists of non-intrusive actions taken to slow or stop deterioration and to prevent damage.

Conservation Treatment involves interventions causing changes in the physical properties or structure of the object.

Restoration involves removal or modification of existing material, or the addition of new material in order to reinstate earlier known aesthetic, historical, or scientific value.

1. The Muse is responsible for the preservation of the artifacts and artwork in its collection. It will provide the best possible physical environment, preventative maintenance programs, and conservation services to meet this responsibility.
2. When an item is donated to The Muse, basic maintenance, (i.e. cleaning, minor repairs), will be done at that time. The Muse will ensure that cleaning, repair, or restoration of any item in the collection is carried out only by qualified personnel, and in such a manner as to maintain the historic and artistic integrity of the item.

Conservation Policy

Policy Number	Page	Of
MU-01-09	2	5

3. Specialized conservation will be undertaken only after consultation with qualified experts and when appropriate according to set museum or gallery standards, as outlined as follows:

Factors That Indicate Conservation Treatment Is Appropriate:

- a) Objects may have a special function.
The Lake of the Woods Museum collects some objects because of a special function they perform. To preserve the functional capability of an object, worn out or defective parts may require replacement. When considering a treatment for this kind of object, ask “Is preservation of function more important than preservation of the original material?”
- b) Appearance of the object may be important.
Restoration is often carried out to improve appearance – especially when an object is prepared for exhibit. Often a decision will have to be made about whether to leave signs of wear and tear, or to restore an object closer to original appearance. Ask these questions:
- Why do I want to restore the former appearance? For example, when deciding whether to replace a missing leg on a chair to be displayed in a historic house, consider that the inhabitants probably did not use a broken chair.
 - When would restoration go too far and be fraudulent or unethical? For example, over painting original material so that some of the original is hidden would be fraudulent.

Factors That Indicate Conservation Treatment Is Not Appropriate:

- a) Collections document the history of, or use of, a technology.
Objects preserve various kinds of information that indicate how they were made and used. Often-times machines and equipment bare the marks of use, oil/grease stains, or other imperfections. These imperfections are part of the story of the item and will not be cleaned or altered unless their existence threatens the integrity of the object or the others around it in storage.
- b) Collections may have scientific research value.
Most archeological, natural history, and archival collections are preserved as evidence or as information for research and study purposes. Some ethnographic and historical collections may be preserved for this reason as well. Conservation activities can destroy evidence on archaeological objects and should therefore be used very sparingly.

Conservation Policy

Policy Number	Page	Of
MU-01-09	3	5

- c) Objects may be culturally or legally significant. Consultation with representatives of Indigenous or other groups should be sought to help identify significant objects and determine appropriate treatments. If there are questions about the acceptability of a treatment, The Muse will wait until more is known. Collections may also have associations with eminent individuals, groups, events, or sites. Staff should be sure that treatment does not destroy evidence of that association. There may be legal issues to consider as well. For example, land records may be used as legal proof, and treatment may affect their legitimacy.
4. The Muse will develop standards for handling, storage, exhibition, packing and transport of its artifacts and artwork in order to best preserve the collection.
 5. The Muse Director, or qualified designate, in consultation with the Museum Curator and/or the Art Centre Curator and with recognized experts in conservation, will be responsible for determining conservation priorities and the nature and extent of conservation treatments to be carried out. A completed condition report will be used as a primary tool in making these decisions.
 6. The Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre will provide storage space for the collections which will be orderly, clean and environmentally controlled, and will allow adequate physical access to the artifacts and artwork. Access to storage areas is restricted to staff of The Muse, unless members of the public are accompanied by a staff member.
 7. The Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre will each provide a temporary holding area separate from storage and exhibition areas, and provide an examination work space.
 8. The Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre will attempt to achieve optimum environmental standards for the preservation of the collection in all physical areas where artifacts and artwork are present. The humidifier and heating system will be serviced and maintained at all times to provide controlled standards for temperature, relative humidity, lighting, and air cleanliness in the Museum and Art Centre buildings.

Conservation Policy

Policy Number	Page	Of
MU-01-09	4	5

9. The Muse will establish procedures to protect the collection from damage or loss through fire, flood, water damage, theft, vandalism, accident, and damage from insects, pests, and vermin.
10. The Muse will establish procedures for the care of the collection in the event of physical emergencies such as fire, flood, accident, etc., and ensure that all staff are thoroughly familiar with these procedures.
11. The Muse will provide in-house training for all staff and will participate, when necessary and possible, in outside training programs for the care and handling of artifacts and artwork.
12. The Muse will ensure that all items in the collection are correctly documented with respect to ownership and incoming and current condition.
13. Each year a portion of the Lake of the Woods Museum's budget and the Douglas Family Art Centre's budget, as determined by The Muse Director and approved by the Muse Board, will be allocated for expenses related to conservation.
14. The Muse will ensure that exhibition methods adhere to the standards of accepted conservation practice.
15. The Muse staff will conduct an object risk assessment inspection at the closing of each day the Lake of the Woods Museum and the Douglas Family Art Centre are open to the public. This inspection will include, but not be limited to, looking for signs of vandalism, theft, water damage, and unlawful access to the storage areas.
16. The Muse will operate in compliance with public health and safety regulations (municipal, provincial, and federal).
17. Conservation services will not be offered to the public.
18. The Muse staff will strive to achieve the highest standards for the collections in their care and their use; they shall follow the institution's stated policies respecting acquisition and disposal, respect the integrity of artifacts and artwork, avoid misuse and illegal activity and, in general, treat all matters relating to collections as matters of trust.

Conservation Policy

Policy Number	Page	Of
MU-01-09	5	5

19. The Conservation Policy shall be presented by the Director to The Muse Board for review at a minimum of every three years.