

# Deaccession & Disposal

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YOU'VE DECIDED TO DEACCESSION, WHAT NOW

OCTOBER 19, 2022



ADVANCING THE WAY WE BUILD AND LIVE



# Transfer of Ownership (sale, donation, exchange)

# SALE

# AAM & AAMD

AAMD:

<https://aamd.org/sites/default/files/document/2011ProfessionalPracticesinArtMuseums.pdf>

<https://aamd.org/for-the-media/press-release/membership-of-aamd-approves-change-to-deaccessioning-rule-bringing>

AAM:

<https://www.aam-us.org/programs/ethics-standards-and-professional-practices/direct-care-of-collections/>

[https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Direct-Care-of-Collections\\_March-2019.pdf](https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Direct-Care-of-Collections_March-2019.pdf)



# Direct Care of Collections Matrix



# Witnessed Destruction

process includes Tacoma Art Museum's director and curator, in consultation with a deaccession committee, and scholars to weigh all considerations by way of the policy when determining whether to deaccession an object or not.

## Deaccessioned Works

Tacoma Art Museum has deaccessioned a total of 553 objects.

- 2017: Deaccessioned 17 objects that are no longer in the collection but were still listed in collection records.
- 2012-2013: Deaccessioned 222 Chinese and Japanese objects. To read the press release, [click here](#).
- 2001-03: Deaccessioned 28 works not directly related to the mission in preparation for move to its new building.
- 2001: Transferred works on paper by Susan Rothenberg and Robert Rauschenberg to the Washington Arts Consortium collection.
- 1999: Deaccessioned 84 Japanese woodblocks prints with recommendation from Dr. Roger Keyes.
- 1994: Deaccessioned 200 works from the early American room. Funds from the sale of these items were used to acquire important works by Jacob Lawrence, The Street Orator's Audience and The Brooklyn Stoop.

**TACOMA  
ART  
MUSEUM**

### Hours

Wednesday 10am - 5pm  
Thursday 10am - 8pm, free admission 5pm - 8pm  
Friday 10 am - 5pm  
Saturday 10am - 5pm  
Sunday 10am - 5pm

### Location

1701 Pacific Avenue  
Tacoma, WA 98402

### Contact

253-272-4258  
[Info@TacomaArtMuseum.org](mailto:Info@TacomaArtMuseum.org)



# BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

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Building the Buffalo AKG Art  
Museum

Art

Events

Learn &  
Create

Community

Support

About



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deaccession



Your search yielded no results.

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search title, artist, style, etc. in deaccessioned artworks



All



has image  on display

## Deaccessioned Artworks

The Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields is undertaking a systematic evaluation of its collections to identify candidates for deaccession or removal by sale, transfer, or exchange. All objects proposed for deaccession are subject to the criteria and procedures outlined in [Newfields's Deaccession Policy](#), including presentation to the Art Committee for approval. Deaccessioning efforts allow the Museum to exchange selected objects for others believed by today's curatorial leadership to be

13550 results found



No object image available.

sort by

Relevance



### A Young Student

Susan Merrill Ketcham (American, 1841-1930)

Deaccessioned on 02.25.1957

**Transfer Notes:** Transferred to the Swope Art Museum, Terre Haute, Indiana



### Young Fisherwoman

August Wilhelm Nikolaus Hagborg (Swedish, 1852-1921)

Deaccessioned on 05.03.2021

**Transfer Notes:** Transferred to Leslie Hindman Auctioneers



- VISIT
- ART
- PROGRAMS
- RESEARCH
- SUPPORT
- ABOUT
- VIRTUAL

Art / Deaccessioned Artworks



- Exhibitions
- Collection
- Conservation
- Texas Art
- Deaccessioned Artworks**

- Accumulation
- Case mask:

## Deaccessioned Artworks

The Dallas Museum of Art affirms its obligation to maintain high standards for its collection, the foundation of all other programs at the Museum. In order to refine and improve this collection, it is necessary to review it periodically and evaluate its appropriateness or importance. Thus the Museum may choose to dispose of works that do not enhance or broaden the Museum's holdings. The Museum will continue to maintain and improve its collections of strength and will only under unusual circumstances dispose of works in these



# QUESTIONS?

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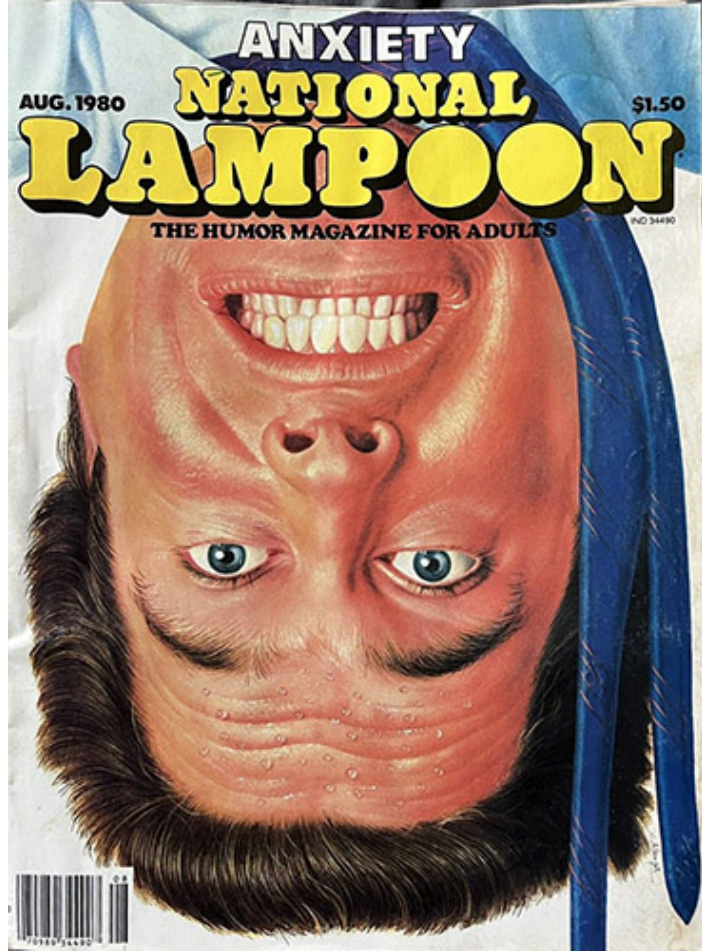


# Deaccession Hurdles and How to Avoid Them

Examples from the Heard Museum



Sharon Moore,  
Museum Association of Arizona



# Why Deaccession?

- Cull unused/unusable objects from collection
- Free up valuable storage space
- Give deacc. objects a useful life elsewhere





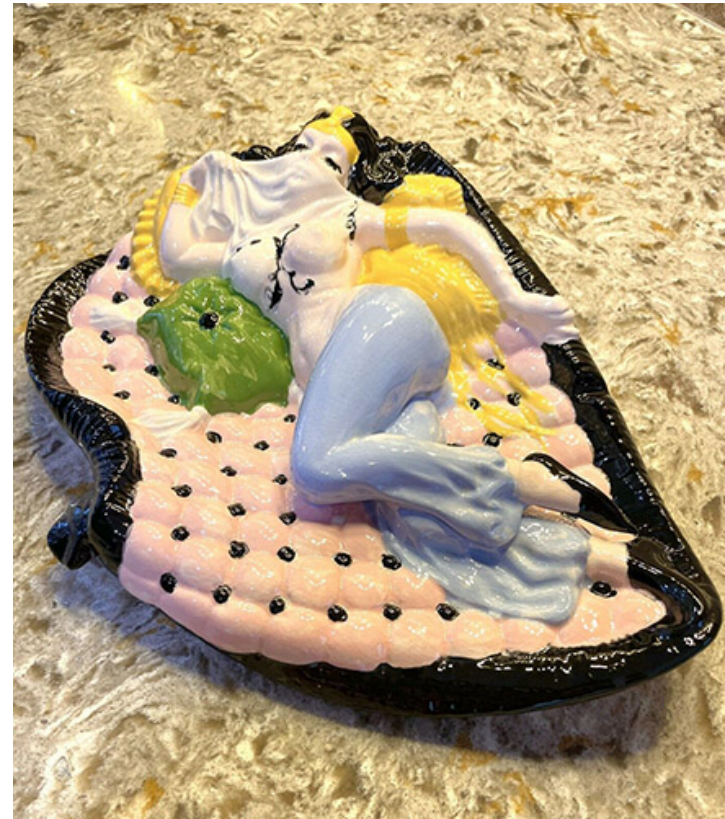
# Deaccession Object Form



- For each object tracks:
  - Who is Artist? Alive?
  - Who on staff recommends?
  - Other staff in support?
  - Consulted outside opinions?
    - What was said and when.
  - Justification for deaccession
    - Fake?
    - Outside of collection scope?
    - Duplicate example?

# Deaccession Object Form

- Who is Donor? Alive?
- Gift restrictions?
- Exhibition history?
- Estimated monetary value?
- Proposed disposal methods?



# Deaccession Checklist

- For each deaccessioned group of objects tracks:
  - Review of policy and procedures
  - Names of staff recommending
  - Review accessions for any gift restrictions
  - Date of Coll. Comm. Approval
  - Date of Full Board approval
  - Obtain copies of minutes
  - Photography of objects



# Deaccession Checklist

- Removal of object ID and tagging of objects
- Creation of spreadsheet connecting object ID to tag #,...
- Database steps
- Disposal steps
- Creation of Transfer or Receipt documents for each disposal
- Any internal procedures, ex: donor notification, report of auction results to Coll. Comm.
- Copies of all documents to deaccession file, all relevant accession files



# South American Baskets

- Purpose of deaccession
  - Cull collection
- Problem
  - Staff not in full agreement on each item
- Result
  - After disposal step, two items remain in storage



# South American Baskets

- Lesson
  - If staff doesn't agree on item, don't deaccession it
  - Focus on objects where there is full agreement



# African Art

- Purpose of deaccession
  - Cull collection
- 1<sup>st</sup> Problem
  - No in-house expertise
- Solution
  - Museum requested outside opinion
  - 3 categories:
    - Genuine
    - Tourist quality
    - Fakes





# African Art

- Result:
  - Genuine artworks kept in collection
  - Tourist art donated to school art program



# African Art



- 2<sup>nd</sup> Problem:
  - Incomplete disposal plan: what to do with fakes?
  - Many years pass because:
    - Concern about reintroduction of fakes into art market
    - No stomach for destruction
    - Museum staff unfamiliar with auction process

# African Art

- Solution
  - Many years later, contacted auction house
  - Sold through their “decorator sale”
  - Required multiple sales
  - Disposal finally completed



# African Art

- Lessons:
  - Enlist outside experts
  - Have disposal plan before deaccessioning



# Sea Shells

- Situation
  - Early donation
  - Broader collection scope
- Purpose of deaccession
  - Not in current collection scope
- Problem
  - No in-house expertise

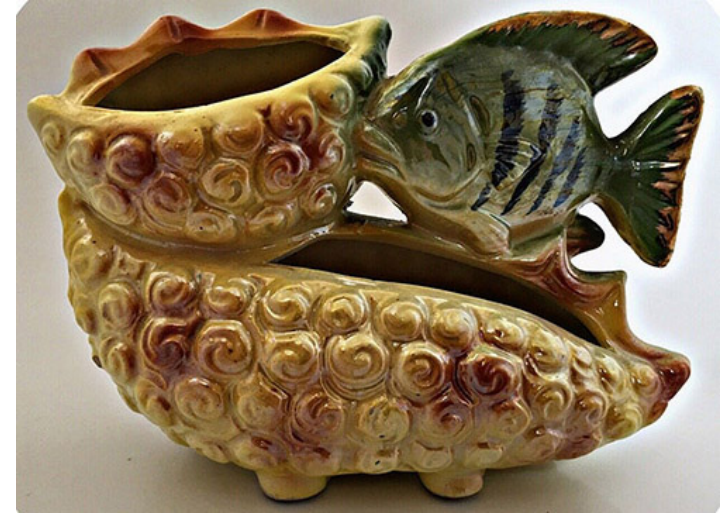


# Sea Shells

- Solution
  - Solicited review from ASU Biology Professor
  - Collection divided into:
    - University research collection
    - University teaching collection
    - High School Science class collection



# Sea Shells



- Results
  - Deaccession and disposal plans were approved
  - Museum followed recommendations of expert
- Lessons
  - Ask expert for disposal suggestions during review
  - Submit disposal plan along with recommendation to deaccession
  - Shared responsibility, provides confidence in executing plan

# Navajo Textiles

- Purpose of deaccession
  - Cull collection
- Situation
  - In-house curator expertise
  - Outside experts consulted anyway





# Navajo Textiles

- Problem
  - After deaccession approval, upon the third review of accession files, found one gift restriction



# Navajo Textiles



- Solution
  - Restricted item donated to another museum

# Navajo Textiles

- Results
  - Disposal required multiple auctions
  - Two separate auction houses: “high end” and “low end”



# Navajo Textiles

- Lessons
  - Outside expertise can supplement internal expertise
  - Prior to recommendation to deacc., complete multiple, thorough reviews of accession records



# Summary

- Deaccessions are complex, fraught with anxiety
- Have policies, procedures and follow them





- Requires cooperation from multiple staff, board
- Done properly, requires multiple approvals



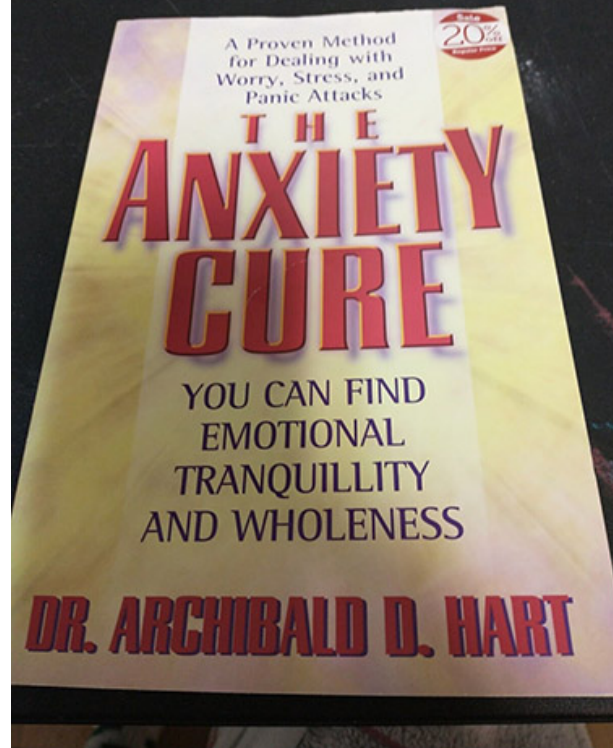
- Avoid contentious objects
- Focus on objects where there is full agreement

- Use object deacc. forms, checklists
- Formulate disposal plan during object review
- Thoroughly review accession records before recommending to deaccession
- Make use of outside expertise





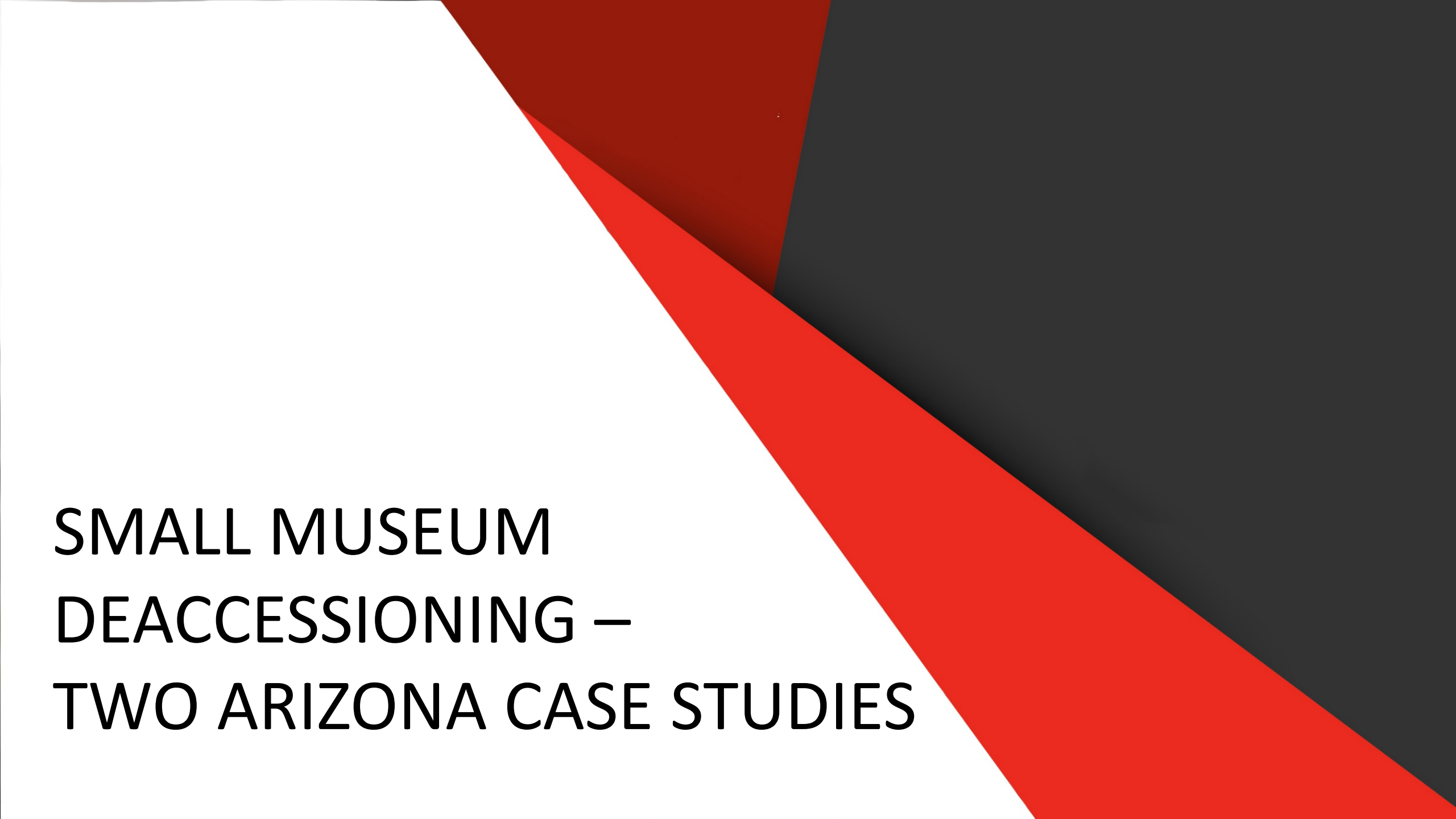




# Resources

- Things Great and Small  
– John E. Simmons
- Museum Registration Methods  
– Multiple editions by various editors
- A Deaccession Reader  
– Stephen E. Weil
- A Legal Primer on Managing Museum Collections  
– Marie C. Malaro





**SMALL MUSEUM  
DEACCESSIONING –  
TWO ARIZONA CASE STUDIES**

(Former) Peoria AZ Historical Society







## Situation:

- defunct nonprofit
- poorly written Bylaws
- gross negligence
- “divorce” mentality – with permanent collection playing the role of the kids
  
- City owned-buildings
- Severe push-back from donors and community at large



CONSTABLE

28 384 406 ↑

0.5FT ASTER PINE MULTI LIGHT  
MADE IN CHINA  
1 PACK  
CASE WT: 26.07 LBS  
SMALL TREES

BIZ + GO  
CHRISTMAS

WANTED posters and notices on the bulletin board, including one for Carlo Leone and another for Bonomo & Clyde.





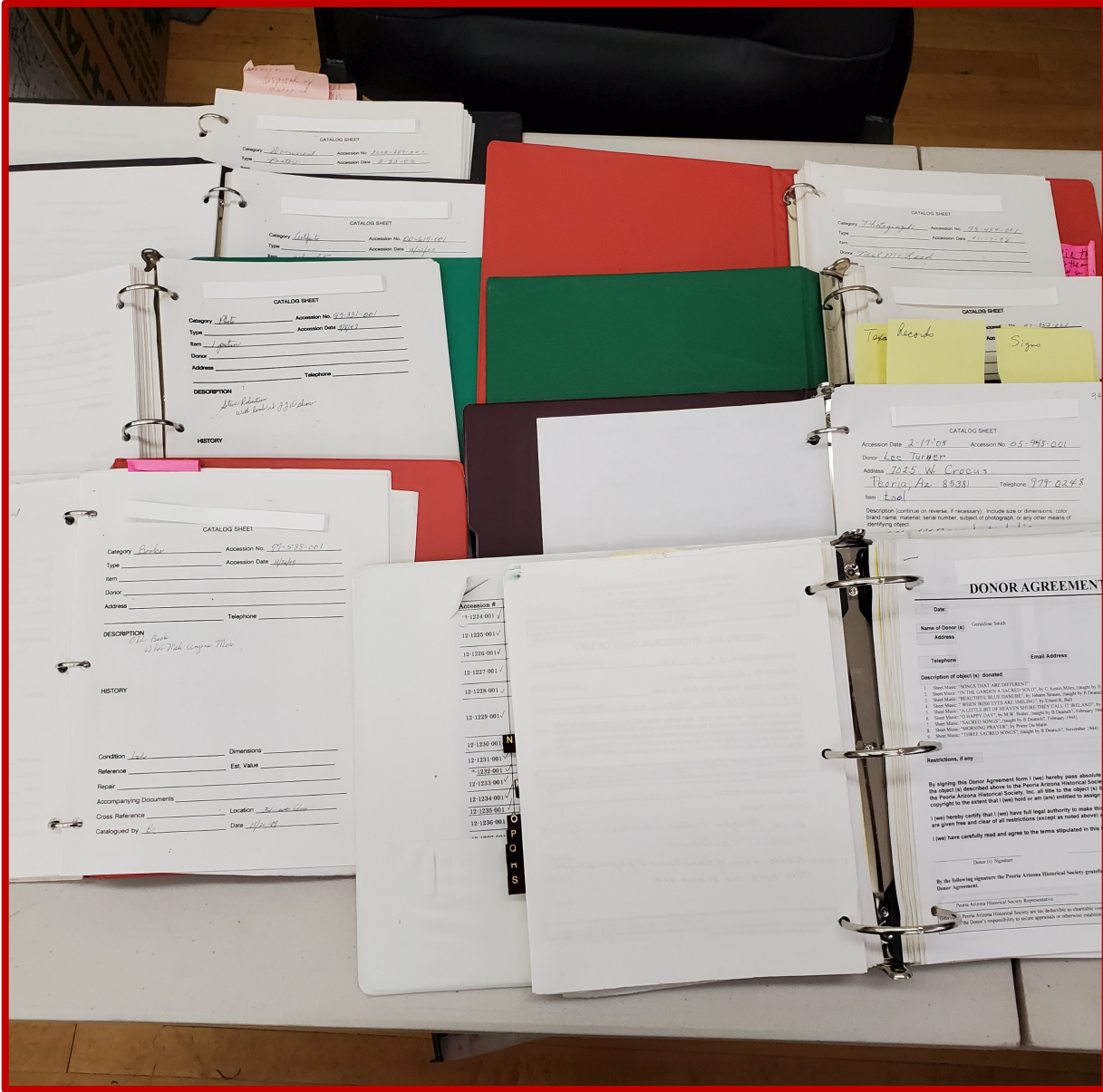
## Discussion:

- City didn't want to manage a museum
- Abandoned property laws
- Museum best practices when there no longer is a museum
- Inadequate recordkeeping
- Missing collections



Ward Schools

CHURCHILL WARD SCHOOL  
The school was founded in the National Ward School  
The school was founded in the National Ward School



Resolution:

- Re-establish recordkeeping
- Identify Donors
- Transparent deaccession language
- Donor Returns
- Public Auction

# Santa Cruz Valley Historical Museum





DOUBLE  
BUY 2 BULBS GET 1 FREE  
BUY 4 BULBS GET 2 FREE

Care

PACK PEEL SEAL

APL  
98  
72



## Situation:

- death of patron/volunteer
- developing small museum
- overwhelming collection
- inadequate storage
- misunderstanding of scope





## Discussion:

- Nostalgia vs. Collections
- Lack of time for education
- Items never accessioned
- Inadequate recordkeeping
- Overall conditions



BANK  
Statements  
Invoices  
1967



## Resolution:

- Board decision
- Public notice
- Public sale
- Management Turn-over
- ???

# Questions and Discussion