



GEORGIA MUSEUM *of* ART

UNIVERSITY OF
GEORGIA

**Protocols for Receiving, Releasing, and Handling Works of Art
During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

These protocols were developed in accordance with the Georgia Museum of Art’s emergency and business continuity plans and are meant to serve as guidelines for museum staff who are required to receive, release, or handle works of art during the COVID-19 pandemic. The protocols will be reviewed monthly and may be revised as knowledge and information about COVID-19 evolves.

On April 17, 2020 the Canadian Conservation Institute issued a CCI Technical Note with the following summarized points:

-Protect people first: follow the advice of your local public health authorities, including practicing physical distancing. If you have not already done so, seriously consider closing your institution, even if it is not yet required.

-Use isolation to prevent or deal with contamination of collection spaces and objects whenever possible. The virus will deactivate naturally within six to nine days. Disinfecting solutions, on the other hand, will damage many heritage materials.

-If disinfection of non-heritage surfaces in collection spaces is required, use methods that permit controlled application of cleaning solutions and disinfectants. Always use disinfectants that have been approved by authorities (Health Canada, US Environmental Protection Agency).

-If your institution needs to close indefinitely, do so in a manner that provides adequate security, fire protection, pest management and environmental control. Implement regular exterior and, if possible, interior inspections. Consider how you would respond to other kinds of emergencies, such as water leaks or fires, if needed.

Keeping these broad recommendations in mind, the following protocols will be implemented for the safe handling of objects and the safe interaction of museum staff with other staff and other museum industry professionals, such as fine arts shippers.

Protect people first:

GMOA staff present for the pick-up, delivery, or general handling of works of art must wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks and gloves, for the duration of their work with the art and while working around other personnel. Staff will also maintain 6 feet of separation from other workers. There will be instances when staff must come within 6

feet of each other in order to safely de-install, move, and/or pack a work of art. In such cases the process will be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible while still maintaining the safety of the work of art. When prolonged work is necessary, such as the installation or deinstallation of exhibitions, the staff will take scheduled breaks during which they should wash their hands with soap for 20 seconds and dry them thoroughly before returning to handling art.

If wrapping or packing by shippers is required, GMOA staff will make the work of art accessible to the shippers in a space appropriate for the safe handling of the object while also maintaining a minimum of 6 feet distance between the shippers and any GMOA staff. Both GMOA staff and fine arts shipper personnel will be required to wear masks and use gloves. Due to the scarcity of supplies during the pandemic, fine arts shippers must provide their own masks and gloves. It is preferable that items be packed on the loading dock when possible. However, large, bulky, or heavy items may be packed by shippers in a gallery or storage area where the objects are currently housed if necessary.

Couriers accompanying loaned works of art will be considered and managed on a case-by-case basis. Every effort will be made to first find a means for the courier to oversee the unpacking, condition reporting, and installation of loaned works remotely, via FaceTime, Zoom, or other digital means of communication. Should an in-person courier be required, all protocols for the process will be discussed and agreed upon between GMOA staff and the courier at least 2 weeks in advance of the visit. All current social distancing and PPE recommendations from local and state guidelines will be required at the time of the visit and, due to the scarcity of supplies during the pandemic, the courier will be required to arrive equipped with all recommended PPE for the visit. Social distancing and PPE measures will likely prolong the time it takes to install loaned objects.

It is recommended that GMOA staff maintain an ongoing personal contact log in order to track all persons they have come in contact with before and during their work receiving, releasing, and handling works of art. Names of shipping personnel visiting the museum can be obtained before the transaction and should be verified at the time of the visit. Should GMOA staff members learn that they themselves or someone they have had contact with has contracted the COVID-19 virus they may then notify persons on their personal contact log, as required by UGA policies and procedures.

It is recommended that anyone who may have come in contact with a potentially contaminated surface should, after removing their gloves, wash their hands thoroughly with soap for 20 seconds. Hand-sanitizer may be used, but is not recommended for anyone who may be handling art, as the alcohol in the sanitizer may potentially damage some objects.

A recommended proper technique for the removal of gloves is as follows:



Staff who are required to work within six feet of each other in order to handle and/or move large, bulky, or heavy works of art should consider using eye protection in addition to masks and gloves. Face shields, if available, provide full protection from airborne droplets, but may prove to be a hindrance to the safe handling of the art. Safety glasses with coverage around the face are a good option, although do not provide 100% protection from airborne droplets. In all cases, staff should avoid touching or rubbing their eyes. Any PPE for eye protection should be issued to each worker for his/her personal use and should not be shared or used by multiple workers.

Use isolation to prevent or deal with contamination of collection spaces and objects whenever possible.

*Note: For the purposes of these guidelines, isolation of works of art is defined as designating an area in an art storage room or a gallery in which objects will remain untouched for a period of time. If it is necessary for staff to enter the room or gallery during the isolation period they may do so, but must not touch the objects.

For single containers or small groups of containers (crates, boxes, bin boxes, individually soft-packed works of art):

Designated receiving and releasing area for single or small groups of containers: GMOA staff will designate an area on the loading dock where works of art to be delivered may be placed by art shipping personnel or where objects to be picked up may be placed by GMOA staff. This area will allow all people present to maintain a distance of 6 feet apart during the transfer of work into or out of the building.

For pick-ups of single or small groups of containers: GMOA staff will place works of art to be picked up by a fine arts shipper in the designated area shortly before the scheduled arrival of the shippers and step away from the area at a distance of 6 feet or more where the transaction can be observed while maintaining proper physical distancing of personnel. Works of art should not be left on the loading dock overnight or for an extended period of time. The shipper or GMOA security will notify the registrar of arrival by phone. GMOA security will raise the dock door and allow the fine arts shipper staff to enter the loading dock through the loading dock bay. Shippers should enter and exit the building through the loading dock bay in order to maintain one point of interaction and will be limited to the loading dock area as a single area of contact. Then, the registrars and preparators can communicate with the shippers regarding the pick-up and observe the loading of the art at a safe and appropriate distance. After the transaction is complete, GMOA staff will clean any gray carts or the hard surfaces of equipment (such as metal handles) used in the transaction with an appropriate cleaning solution such as a 70% isopropyl alcohol solution. Cleaning solutions should not be applied to equipment with porous surfaces such as wood, foam board, cardboard, or carpet. GMOA staff will, when possible, place a buffer of tissue or paper between the object and the equipment and dispose of the buffer material immediately after removing the item.

For deliveries of single or small groups of containers: Prior to the arrival of objects, registrars and/or preparators will place any needed equipment for holding or transporting the art (i.e. gray carts, A-frame carts, dollies, etc.) in the designated area on the loading dock. The shipper or GMOA security will notify the registrar of arrival by phone. GMOA security will raise the dock door and allow the fine arts shipper staff to enter the loading dock through the loading dock bay. Shippers should enter and exit the building through the loading dock bay in order to maintain one point of interaction and will be limited to the loading dock area as a single area of contact. When works of art are delivered, from an appropriate distance the registrars and/or preparators will direct the shippers to place the objects in the designated area and onto the cart or dolly, as necessary. Or, a single small object may be carried by the shipper to the isolation area as directed by a GMOA staff member at an appropriate distance. The shippers will photograph the delivery as needed for documentation and then exit the building. After the transaction is complete, GMOA staff will clean any carts or equipment used in the transaction with an appropriate cleaning solution, such as a 70% isopropyl alcohol solution. Cleaning solutions should not be applied to equipment with porous surfaces such as wood, foam board, cardboard, or carpet. GMOA

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staff will, when possible, place a buffer of tissue or paper between the object and the equipment and dispose of the buffer material immediately after removing the item.

GMOA staff will not sign paperwork or digital touch pads. We will work with shippers to determine a way to document the safe arrival or pick-up of works of art, for instance by using photographs.

Upon completion of a delivery or pick-up, GMOA staff should dispose of their gloves used in the transaction in the nearest trash can. It is recommended that staff who have touched the packed object also wash their hands with soap for 20 seconds once the object has been placed in the quarantine room. Hand-sanitizer may be used, but is not recommended if the staff member will be handling works of art.

For traveling exhibitions in which large numbers of containers will be received or released at once (crates, boxes, bin boxes, individually soft-packed works of art):

Designated receiving and releasing area for traveling exhibitions: GMOA staff will designate an area in a gallery or a storage vault where all of the packed containers for a traveling exhibition being delivered may be placed for isolation or where all of the packed containers for a traveling exhibition will be compiled for pick-up by fine arts shipping personnel. This area will be marked with a perimeter and will be considered a quarantine area until the isolation period has ended or until the containers have been released from the building to a fine arts shipper. In cases in which shippers need to come into the building beyond the loading dock area in order to pack and move large, bulky, or heavy works of art, they may enter through the security entrance. They must sign in and sign out, receive a badge for further entry, and must be wearing PPE.

For pick-ups of large traveling exhibitions: GMOA staff will place containers to be picked up by a fine arts shipper in the designated area prior to the arrival of the shipper and step away from the area at a distance of 6 feet or more where the transaction can be observed while maintaining proper physical distancing of personnel. Or, containers may be moved by GMOA staff to the designated area on the loading dock singly or in small groups, then step away from the designated loading dock area at a distance of 6 feet or more where the transaction can be observed while maintaining proper physical distancing of personnel. This process would be repeated until all containers for the traveling exhibition are loaded onto the truck. After the transaction is complete, GMOA staff will clean any carts or equipment used in the transaction with an appropriate cleaning solution, such as a 70% isopropyl alcohol solution. Cleaning solutions should not be applied to equipment with porous surfaces such as wood, foam board, cardboard, or carpet. GMOA staff will, when possible, place a buffer of tissue or paper between the object and the equipment and dispose of the buffer material immediately after removing the item.

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For deliveries of large traveling exhibitions: Prior to the arrival of objects, registrars and/or preparators will place any needed equipment for holding or transporting the art (i.e. gray carts, A-frame carts, dollies, etc.) in the designated area on the loading dock. The shipper or GMOA security will notify the registrar of arrival by phone. GMOA security will raise the dock door and allow the fine arts shipper staff to enter through the loading dock bay. Shippers should enter and exit the building through the loading dock bay in order to maintain one point of interaction and will be limited to the loading dock area as a single area of contact. When works of art are delivered, from an appropriate distance the registrars and/or preparators will direct the shippers to place the objects in the designated area and onto the cart or dolly, as necessary. The shippers will photograph the delivery as needed for documentation. The shipping personnel will then be asked to step away at least 6 feet from the loading dock designated area and GMOA staff will move to the area and transport the items to the designated isolation area in a gallery or vault storage. The process will be repeated until all containers for the traveling exhibition have been received and moved to the designated isolation area. After the transaction is complete, GMOA staff will clean any carts or equipment used in the transaction with an appropriate cleaning solution, such as a 70% isopropyl alcohol solution. Cleaning solutions should not be applied to equipment with porous surfaces such as wood, foam board, cardboard, or carpet. GMOA staff will, when possible, place a buffer of tissue or paper between the object and the equipment and dispose of the buffer material immediately after removing the item.

Handling of delivered objects: Delivered objects will need to be isolated for at least six (6) days and preferably for nine (9) days before they may be safely handled and unpacked. Objects will remain in the packing materials in which they are received until the isolation period has ended. The designated quarantine room for single or small groups of delivered items will be the Packing Room (the room will be cleared of general supplies and tools, which will be relocated to the old prep office on the loading dock). A sign will be placed on both packing room doors notifying staff that the room has been designated as a quarantine space for delivered works of art. Staff should not handle anything in the room unless given approval to do so by the Head Registrar or the Chief Preparator when the isolation period has ended. GMOA staff must be wearing gloves when handling a packed object in order to move it into the quarantine room after delivery and those gloves must be disposed of in the nearest garbage can. It is recommended that staff who have moved the packed object also wash their hands with soap for 20 seconds once the object has been placed in the quarantine room. Hand-sanitizer may be used, but is not recommended if the staff member will be handling works of art.

The designated quarantine area for large groups of containers received for traveling exhibitions will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may be in a gallery or vault storage area. The area will be marked with a perimeter and labeled as a quarantine area with signage. Staff should not handle anything in the area unless given approval to do so by the Head Registrar or the Chief Preparator when the isolation period ends.

Delivered items will be documented in the following manner in order to track the objects, the date on which they entered quarantine, and the date on which they may removed from quarantine:

1. A tracking sheet will be placed on the Packing Room door in the vault hallway. The person placing a work of art in the quarantine room must write on the tracking sheet the object, type of packing, date entering the room, and her/his name. There will also be a space to indicate when the object is removed from the room. The staff member should use her/his own pencil to enter the information on the tracking sheet.
2. Once the object is placed in the room, a quarantine label will be placed on the packed object. The label will contain the following information: the object information, date it entered the room, and date it can be removed. Soft-packed items will be placed on foam leaning against a designated wall. Do not put single items into the bins so that we may avoid potentially contaminating those tight spaces.

***Note: implementing these recommended isolation times for delivered objects will increase the amount of lead time needed when objects should be received at the museum before exhibition installation activities can begin in order to allow the objects to be in isolation for nine days before they can be safely handled.**

Interactions with private lenders:

First and foremost is the safety of our private lenders and GMOA preparators. Lenders will be contacted ahead of a pick-up or return delivery and asked about their own plans for social interaction and when they might feel comfortable having GMOA preparators enter their homes for these transactions. All current social distancing and PPE recommendations from local and state guidelines will be required at the time of the visit with the private lender. The preparators staff will discuss and develop with the lender well ahead of the interaction a plan for successfully picking up or returning works of art while maintaining the safety of all people involved and the objects being handled.

GMOA preparators will limit communication with private lenders to the facts regarding their planned interaction only and avoid prolonged chatting or discussion of the museum's operations. Such discussions may create unnecessary anxiety or uncertainty about the museum. Staff should complete the pick-up or delivery task as quickly and efficiently as possible, maintaining their safety and the safety of the art, and avoid prolonged time in the lender's space.

GMOA preparators and private lenders will not be required to sign paperwork at the time of the transaction. Rather, the preparators will document the pick-up or delivery via photographs which they will send to the registrars' office as verification of the completed transaction. Receipt and release forms will be sent by the registrars to the lenders via Fill & Sign PDF documents which can be signed digitally and returned via email.

If disinfection of non-heritage surfaces in collection spaces is required, use methods that permit controlled application of cleaning solutions and disinfectants.

A comprehensive plan for the cleaning of all public spaces in the museum will be developed by GMOA administration in conjunction with UGA FMD. Any plans for cleaning and/or disinfecting of spaces where art is displayed or stored, such as the lobby, galleries or art storage vaults, will be made in consultation with the Head Registrar, Chief Preparator, Facilities Manager, Director, Deputy Director, and UGA FMD. All materials used and the type of application must be approved by museum staff in order to permit a controlled application that will not endanger the works of art.

If your institution needs to close indefinitely, do so in a manner that provides adequate security, fire protection, pest management and environmental control. Implement regular exterior and, if possible, interior inspections. Consider how you would respond to other kinds of emergencies, such as water leaks or fires, if needed.

GMOA has been closed indefinitely since March 23, 2020 and has implemented the museum’s Business Continuity Plan. Security supervisors are present in the building daily, monitoring the security of the building as well as the operation of the HVAC system and other building mechanical systems. Daily interior and exterior checks are performed and two security supervisors perform an inspection of the art storage vaults once a week. Also, the Head Registrar inspects the art storage vaults once a week.

Currently, museum staff are following a protocol of no more than five people (in addition to present security staff) present in the museum at any one time. Staff must notify security in advance of their plans to enter the museum so that security may monitor the number of people in the building. When entering, staff must sign the sheet posted at the security entrance acknowledging that they have read the posted guidelines concerning social distancing and other safety measures.

Equipment needed to implement these guidelines:

- N95 masks (when available) or other appropriate masks
- Nitrile gloves
- Wraparound safety glasses
- 70% isopropyl alcohol (rubbing alcohol) or other appropriate cleaning solutions
- Paper towels
- Tissue, plastic, or brown paper for lining equipment used to move objects

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SAMPLE FORMS

The following section provides sample forms as described in the protocols:

- Quarantine area sign
- Object quarantine label
- Packing Room Isolation check in sheet



QUARANTINE AREA

THIS AREA DESIGNATED
FOR THE ISOLATION OF
WORKS OF ART

DO NOT TOUCH OBJECTS
UNLESS ADVISED TO DO SO
BY THE HEAD REGISTRAR OR
CHIEF PREPARATOR



QUARANTINE

Do Not Touch Until Isolation
Period Has Ended

Object: _____

Date quarantine begins: _____

Date quarantine ends: _____

Placed in quarantine by: _____

