

## The ICMA Code of Ethics for Research and Use of Works of Art

### 1. Research Ethics

In the course of presenting and publishing their research, scholars are obliged to acknowledge and truthfully represent their sources. Since scholars are responsible for upholding ethical as well as scholarly standards, the ICMA takes a firm stand against plagiarism in all its forms - from verbatim, unattributed copying of another person's writings to a more general, unacknowledged appropriation of another's original ideas. Researchers should never mislead their audiences by plagiarizing, fabricating data, presenting false evidence, or knowingly omitting evidence that contradicts their claims. During the research process, it is the scholar's duty to take notes that clearly differentiate between exact quotations and paraphrases from a given primary or secondary source. During the writing process, scholars are obligated to acknowledge accurately, consistently, and thoroughly, all the sources that contributed to the substance of the work.

Researchers applying for grants should not knowingly mislead funding organizations about the nature of their projects. Funding gained in support of research must be used only for that project for which it was awarded.

Any collaboration with or assistance from individuals or institutions must be acknowledged in one's published presentations. Researchers should credit by name those colleagues, students, and friends who have contributed ideas, particularly when these contributions advance work intended for publication.

The limits of one's certainty about one's data and argument should be stated clearly and frankly, such that no doubt remains about what information is speculation.

Funding gained in support of research must be used only for that project for which it was awarded.

Any collaboration with or assistance from individuals or institutions must be acknowledged in one's published presentations.

Scholars should be aware of possible conflicts of interest and consider the implications of their research for areas outside their immediate field: for example, the art market, the historical preservation of buildings, or the community where a building or work of art may be located.

The common good of the field should always be placed above individual self-interest.

For more detail on the ethical issues of research see: the College Art Association Code of Ethics for Art Historians and the Guidelines for the Professional Practice for Art History: [http://www.collegeart.org/caa/ethics/art\\_hist\\_ethics.html](http://www.collegeart.org/caa/ethics/art_hist_ethics.html), on which the recommendations above are based. The ICMA fully supports the statement on plagiarism put forward by the American Historical Association, accessible at:

<http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/ProfessionalStandards.cfm#Plagiarism>

## 2. Appropriate conduct

### Access

Providers of access to works of art and archival materials should offer clearly stated guidelines to scholars seeking to do research on or with their materials.

Regardless of the projected outcome or opinion to be expressed as a result of the research, providers should facilitate access to materials and monuments to all researchers who can demonstrate a need to study original objects and documents.

Facilitating access includes allowing a researcher to examine original archival materials and photographs for relevant material, even if the researcher cannot name a specific item within that archive; it also includes permission to take notes in situ. According to the College Art Association, "All art historical research materials, including but not limited to works of art, photographs, diaries, letters, and other documents in the possession of publicly supported or tax exempt, non-profit, educational institutions, whether in the United States or elsewhere, where not legally restricted as to use, shall be freely and fully accessible to art historians for research and publication."

### Users of Research Facilities

Researchers in museums, libraries, collections, and monuments should inform themselves of the rules of the respective institution and abide by them when on site. Whether directly supervised by institutional personnel or not, researchers must obey guidelines regulating access to materials and photography of objects, buildings, or sites.

If research is needed on areas that are off limits to the public, arrangements should be made in advance with representatives of the institution.

Objects should be handled carefully, using all due precautions to avoid damage and in accordance with the regulations of the institution. The directions of the custodians of the objects must be followed. No ICMA member should knowingly damage any medieval building or artifact.

Researchers should respect an institution's or collector's right to withhold confidential information such as prices for objects recently purchased, or correspondence over legal issues.

All institutions that have aided the researcher's work by providing access to visual or textual materials or by providing financial support must be acknowledged in any resulting publication.

#### Rights and Reproductions

Recognizing that the cost of acquiring and reproducing photographs has recently become prohibitive for many scholars, the ICMA supports any efforts to reduce the cost of purchasing and publishing photographs of works of art.

Institutions should either allow researchers to take photographs, or make every possible effort to provide photographs at a reasonable cost.

When a scholar is granted a reduced fee for photography, no commercial use should be made of the photographs without first seeking permission.

### 3. Museums, Libraries, Archives, and Collections Ethics

#### Collecting

The International Center for Medieval Art considers the Code of Ethics for Museums, 2000, published by the American Association of Museums, to be an excellent model for best practices for collections of medieval art, whether public or private, and urges those who hold these collections to adhere to their guidelines. Specifically:

- collections should be lawfully held, protected, secure, unencumbered, cared for, and preserved;

- collections should be accounted for and documented;
- access to collections and related information is permitted and regulated;
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities are conducted in a manner that respects the protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources and discourages illicit trade in such materials;
- acquisition, disposal, and loan activities of museums conform to their mission and public trust responsibilities;
- disposal of museum or library collections through sale or trade is solely for the advancement of the museum's mission. Proceeds from the sale of collections are to be used consistent with the established standards of the museum's discipline, but in no event shall they be used for anything other than acquisition or direct care of collections;
- the unique and special nature of human remains and funerary and sacred objects is recognized as the basis of all decisions concerning such collections;
- competing claims of ownership that may be asserted in connection with objects in custody should be handled openly, seriously, responsibly, and with respect for the dignity of all parties involved.

### Conservation

The ICMA recommends that object conservators follow the guidelines of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, whose standards of practice may be accessed online: <http://aic.stanford.edu/pubs/ethics.html>. The following principles, adapted from the above, should guide conservation professionals:

- Their actions "must be governed by an informed respect for the cultural property, its unique character and significance, and the people or person who created it."
- Methods and materials should be selected "that, to the best of current knowledge, do not adversely affect

cultural property or its future examination, scientific investigation, treatment, or function."

- Examination, scientific investigation, and treatment should be documented by creating permanent records and reports.

#### 4. Historic monuments

In accordance with the principles of the Archaeological Institute of America, scholars should:

- Seek to ensure that the exploration of archaeological sites be conducted according to the highest standards under the direct supervision of qualified personnel, and that the results of such research be made public.
- Refuse to participate in the trade of undocumented antiquities and refrain from activities that enhance the commercial value of such objects. Undocumented antiquities are those which are not documented as belonging to a public or private collection before December 30, 1970, when the AIA Council endorsed the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Property, or which have not been excavated and exported from the country of origin in accordance with the laws of that country.
- Inform appropriate authorities of threats to, or plunder of archaeological sites, and illegal import or export of archaeological material.

More on this issue can be found on the AIA website: <http://www.archaeological.org/> and The World Monuments Fund: <http://www.wmf.org/>

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