

## **The ICMA Code of Ethics**

The International Center of Medieval Art (ICMA) recognizes the global reach of Medieval Studies, which encompasses the wide diversity of the field's subjects along with its members [[link to mission statement]]. The ICMA is therefore committed both to an inclusive conception of the Middle Ages and to an inclusive practice of scholarship. The ICMA affirms a commitment to transparency in its operations and to mentorship within its community. The organization advocates the highest standards of citizenship and integrity in members' professional conduct, in accordance with the Code of Professional Ethics adopted by the Medieval Academy of America [[<https://www.medievalacademy.org/page/Policies>]] and the Code of Research Ethics detailed below.

### **Procedures for award/program selection**

The ICMA commits to transparency in the selection of award recipients. Application guidelines and procedures for the selection of awardees should be clearly stated in application materials. Whenever possible, rubrics used to rank proposals and samples of awarded proposals should be made available to applicants. All applicants should receive a courtesy notification confirming the submission of a completed application and a final notification with feedback after selections are made.

### **Public-facing scholarship and Public engagement**

Because study of the past is important for the common good of society, the ICMA affirms its commitment to support public-facing scholarship and projects that encourage public engagement with medieval art and/or architecture.

### **Research and Use of Works of Art**

#### **1. Academic Freedom and Research Ethics**

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

The freedom of scholars to conceive and pursue lines of inquiry is a core value of the ICMA.

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: <https://www.collegeart.org/standards-and-guidelines/guidelines/art-history-ethics>, 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>

In the course of presenting and publishing their research, scholars are obliged fully to acknowledge and truthfully to 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.

Any collaboration with or assistance from individuals or institutions must be fully 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.

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

Scholars should be aware of possible conflicts of interest and consider the implications of their research for areas outside of 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.

## **2. Appropriate Conduct in Fieldwork**

### *Access*

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, nonprofit, 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." 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, official 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.

#### *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 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 about 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. We especially applaud institutions that have made high-quality photographs of their collections open access.

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

No commercial use should be made of the photographs without first seeking permission, other than normal publication royalties.

### 3. Museums, Libraries, Archives, Collections and Conservation 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 should be permitted and regulated.
- Acquisition, disposal, and loan activities should be conducted in a manner that respects the protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources; and that discourages, and if possible blocks, illicit trade in such materials.
- Acquisition, disposal, and loan activities of museums should 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, exhibition, publication or direct care of collections.
- The unique and special nature of human remains and funerary and sacred objects should be 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 The American Institute for Conservation and the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation, whose standards of practice may be accessed online:

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/about-conservation/code-of-ethics>.

The following principles, largely 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." When at all possible, conservation interventions should be discernible upon close examination and should be reversible.
- Examination, scientific investigation, and treatment should be documented by creating permanent records and reports of existing conditions, conservation interventions, and final results.

#### 4. Historic monuments

The ICMA recommends that conservators of historic monuments and sites abide by the Venice Charter and consult documents available on the website of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), located at:

<https://www.icomos.org/en/what-we-do/involvement-in-international-conventions/standards>

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 to ensure that the results of such research be documented fully and 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/>

The ICMA statement of Research Ethics was written by the Advocacy Committees of 2003, 2004 and 2005. It includes contributions by William Diebold, Jacqueline Jung, Gregor Kalas,

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