

# Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection

# Collections Plan

Center for Design and Material Culture  
School of Human Ecology  
University of Wisconsin-Madison



**Center for Design  
and Material Culture**  
SCHOOL OF HUMAN ECOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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# I. Preface

## **A. Purpose of this Document**

The Collections Plan's purpose is to provide guidance on the successful development and refinement of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection's Permanent Collection (hereafter the HLATC or the Permanent Collection). The Plan advocates for a thoughtful, integrated approach to collecting based on a rational framework that supports the long-term sustainability of the HLATC and is grounded in a mission built around our end users and upholds the public trust. The provisions and recommendations outlined below are the first to be codified as a formal Collections Plan in the fifty-year history of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection.

## **B. Future Revisions**

The Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection's Permanent Collection derives its identity, strengths, and activities from its holdings. The provisions laid out in the HLATC Collections Plan will be guided by and remain responsive to the Permanent Collection's mission. As a "living" document, the HLATC Collections Plan, along with related collections management policies, should be routinely reviewed and updated every 3-5 years to align with evolving mission.

## II. Introduction

### **A. Mission Statement**

The Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection advances understanding of cultures and their history through engagement with textiles for the creative, technical, and educational benefit of scholars from the University and beyond.

### **B. Purpose of the Collection**

The Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection is a teaching collection that supports the teaching, research, and outreach missions of the UW-Madison and the School of Human Ecology. Portions of the 13,000 artifacts in the Collection are on view year-round in the Lynn Mecklenburg Textile Gallery and in scheduled exhibitions in the Ruth Davis Design Gallery. The Collection also organizes and hosts class visits, tours, and public programs. The purpose of these activities is to use textiles as primary sources to inspire and to educate students and other interest groups about past and present artistic and design practices and their dynamic manifestations in diverse material, social, and cultural contexts. Key value propositions include accessibility and opportunities for hands on learning; relevancy to Design Studies curricula; and advocacy for the important place of textiles in human history.

### **C. HLATC Audiences**

The Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection and the Lynn Mecklenburg Textile Gallery, along with the Ruth Davis Design Gallery, are resources of the Center for Design and Material Culture. Together they support the School of Human Ecology's Design Studies Department and other campus programs, including the UW-Madison Material Culture Studies Program. In keeping with the Wisconsin Idea that the work of the University should extend beyond the classroom boundaries to influence lives for the better, the activities of the HLATC also include outreach to diverse on-campus communities, off-campus visitors and groups, visiting artists and scholars, global artisans, textile interest groups, and collectors. Exhibitions and public programs are free and open to the public. Study visits to examine textiles in the Permanent Collection are available by appointment. Campus affiliated-users have free access to study visits; external community groups are assessed a booking fee on a sliding scale.

### III. Five-Year Action Plan Summary 2017 – 2022

#### **A. Collections Assessment**

From May-December 2017 Curator/Collections Manager Natasha Thoreson undertook an assessment of the Permanent Collection at the request of the Collection's Director Sherry Harlacher. At the completion of the assessment priorities for further research, accession and deaccession were identified.

#### **B. Current State of the Collection**

There are, at present, 13,141 records for textiles and textile-related objects in the collection database. These holdings are representative of human history on six continents; nevertheless, Europe and North American currently account for 70% of the Permanent Collection (see Appendix Five). A majority of the Permanent Collection dates from the late 18th to the 20th century. Over the past two decades, requests for study access to non-Western textiles has increased steadily as the research focus of tenured faculty in the Textile and Fashion Design Program has shifted towards the development of artisan enterprises in India, West Africa, Mexico, and Ecuador. Encouraging students to act as global citizens has become a key value of the School of Human Ecology under Dean Shim's leadership.

#### **C. Research Priorities**

1. Identify Samplers for potential deaccession due to poor condition, authenticity, or quality of design
2. Identify patterns and verify attribution dates for Coverlets
3. Determine how Bed Covers might be used in classes and other visits
4. Expand catalog records and photograph Rugs
5. Clarify rationale for Wall Hangings
6. Clarify rationale for Western Costume Accessories
7. Clarify rationale for Non-Western Costume and Costume Accessories
8. Expand catalog records for Non-Western Costume, Oceania
9. Expand catalog records and photograph Western Flat Textiles
10. Clarify rationale and expand catalog records and photograph Non-Western Flat Textiles

#### **D. Collecting Priorities**

1. 18th century chintz or wholecloth English quilt made for export to the American colonies
2. Art quilt with local community significance or value
3. Utilitarian quilt in the style of Gee's Bend
4. Quilts by minority groups (e.g., Native Americans)
5. Latin American, North African, and Near Eastern rugs
6. Beaded dress from the 1920s
7. 18th century dress, knitwear, men's or women's suits from the 1930s-1950s
8. Diane von Furstenberg wrap dress
9. Pleated Mariano Fortuny gown
10. Garments with interesting pattern design (e.g., Emilio Pucci, Zandra Rhodes, or Lilly Pulitzer)
11. Major works of fiber art by Sheila Hicks, Kaffe Fassett, and others
12. Feed sack fabric from the 1930s-1960s
13. Patriotic fabric from the 1940s
14. Atomic age (1950s) fabrics by well-known designers (e.g., Lucienne Day, Jacqueline Groag, Marian Mahler, Robert Steward, Stig Lindberg, Josef Frank, Ray Eames, Dorothy Draper, Scalamandré)
15. Pop Art fabrics from the 1960s and 1970s (e.g., Heal Fabrics, Zandra Rhodes, Eddie Squires, Jack Lenor Larsen, Wonder Workshop)
16. Small scale floral prints from the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Laura Ashley)
17. Furnishing or apparel fabrics from the 1990s to the present
18. Islamic textiles from Africa
19. Non-Western Costume: Gaps
  - Southeast Asia: beadwork, tapestry or tie-dye (pelangi or tritik)
  - Africa: beaded Dinka vest, Yoruba headdress, Iraqw skirt, Kuba belt, woven, dyed, or appliqued garments from Libya or the Sudan, veils, shoes, hats and headdresses, bags, baby carriers
  - Japan: shibori
  - Latin America: footwear, headwear

## **E. Deaccession Priorities**

1. Baskets (F.C.PO.0091, F.C.A.0046, D.C.A.0065, D.C.A.0066)
2. Dolls (2001.01.001-.012, D.C.A.0070a-h, 2002.09.003a-hh)
3. Commercial paper swatches (2007.06.009a-f and 2007.06.010a-d)
4. Historical paper swatches (W.L.E.2410a-h)
5. Paper kit (2007.06.008)
6. 7 scarves and 2 veils from Egypt (L.N.A.0034, L.N.A.0040, L.N.A.0044, L.N.A.0045, L.N.A.0046, L.N.A.0047, L.T.A.0036, 1989.06.006, 1989.06.007)
7. Moroccan dagger and 2 Moroccan flasks (1985.14.069, 1985.14.054, 1985.14.070)
8. Nigerian cap (2006.09.028)
9. Unidentified African accessories (D.C.A.0024, W.C.UN.2445, L.T.A.0429, F.B.A.006, K.H.A.0132)
10. Indian shirt (E.A.I.0173)
11. Chinese robes (E.A.CH.1545, 1983.05.002)
12. Japanese kimono and obi (P.R.J.0312, 1986.04.001, E.A.J.1526a-b, E.A.J.1537a-b, E.A.J.1538a-b, E.A.J.1546a-b, E.A.J.1772, E.MM.J.1634, P.D.J.0236, 1988.02.001a-b, W.J.J.2403a-b)
13. Art quilt (1989.07.002)
14. Fiber art weaving samples (1984.05.001, 1984.05.002)
15. Marion D. Pease wall hanging (W.L.US.2040)
16. Tools, paper patterns, stencils, yarn, and dye balls (217 items total)
17. Previously identified objects for deaccession (over 1000 items total)



## IV. Collections Scope

There are at present 13,141 textiles and textile-related objects in the Permanent Collection. These objects are representative of human history on six continents and most date from the late 18th to the 20th century. The oldest objects in the HLATC are 6 ancient Peruvian objects woven circa 2nd century BCE. 70% of the Permanent Collection's holdings have European or North American cultural origins. The remainder comes from Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Oceania (see Appendix B). Requests for study access to non-Western textiles has increased steadily in the past two decades as the focus of the Textile and Fashion Design faculty has shifted towards the development of artisan enterprises in India, West Africa, Mexico, and Ecuador.

For the purposes of this inaugural Collections Plan, the Permanent Collection's disparate holdings have been classified according to three categories: Finished Textiles, Flat Textiles, and Tools (see above: B. Key Terms). The Finished category is further divided into major Collecting Categories to account for the variety of object types. Each Collecting Category below is described according to four paradigms defined in the Key Terms section of this document. They are as follows: 1) a description of the holdings in that area; 2) a statement of significance that often takes into account how well the collecting category aligns with the teaching mission; 3) an assessment of an area's strengths and weaknesses as revealed during the valuation process; and 4) a collecting recommendation.

Finished Textiles account for 73% of the HLATC's holdings; Flat Textiles account for 25% of the HLATC's holdings; and Tools account for 2% of the HLATC's holdings.

The Finished category is further divided into major sub-categories. Sub-categories contain a statement of significance, a description of the holdings, strengths, a gap analysis, and collecting recommendations. These analyses were based on a collections valuation framework adapted from the model developed by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands. A sample valuation form and the Netherlands article are included in Appendices Five and Six.

**A.**  
**Finished Textiles:**  
**Household Related**

## i. Finished Textiles: Quilts

**Description:** The 276-piece HLATC quilt collection is varied and highly representative of the major quilting movements and styles from the late 18th to the early 20th century. Crazy quilts make up the majority of the 19th century holdings in this collecting category.

**Significance:** Several exceptional and unique quilts in this collecting category make this a particularly strong asset for potential exhibition, research, and lending purposes. As representations of “women’s work,” quilts can be especially useful for discussing the history and evolution of gender roles and production. Because quilts are usually made from many different printed fabrics, they are useful for illustrating the history of pattern design and design trends (e.g., color, motif, pattern size). They can also be used to facilitate discussions of trade, globalization, nationalism, community, technology, commodity, collecting, and disparities of wealth and power.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The quilts are generally in stable condition and well suited for study visits and exhibitions. Past and recent history has demonstrated that quilt exhibitions appeal to and are successful at drawing local community interest groups and other external visitors. This collecting category is currently underused by classes in both Textile and Fashion Design and Interior Architecture. Rather than HLATC’s traditional quilts, TFD faculty have recently expressed more of a preference for exhibitions of contemporary art quilts. Quilts by minority groups (e.g., Native Americans) are not well represented.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Low Growth Recommended. With the recent addition of a tenured textile historian to the Design Studies faculty, TFD class usage may increase. HLATC could consider increasing the range of the collection by adding the following quilt types: an 18th century chintz or wholecloth English quilt made for export to the American colonies; an art quilt with local community significance or value; and a utilitarian quilt in the Gee’s Bend style.

## ii. Finished Textiles: Samplers

**Description:** The 96-piece sampler collecting category comprises an excellent selection of late 19th century practical or reference samplers used in European embroidery education. There are also a few knitted and crocheted specimens and a small number of good quality samplers typically made by schoolgirls.

**Significance:** The sampler collecting category is most frequently used by Design Studies courses studying embroidery and surface design. The samplers are also of potential interest to external embroiderer's guilds and children's groups because the purpose of a majority of HLATC's samplers was to serve as reference guides for needlework education.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The sampler collection includes an excellent example from 1730 by one Margaret Naderin (E.A.E.0317) and an anonymous German blue-and-white sampler of superior workmanship (E.A.E.0267). Nine Spanish samplers featuring withdrawn element work and needlelace or hemstitching provide an interesting comparison with the more typical European embroidered types. A 20th century sampler of interest was made by Helen Louise Allen in the 1940s, probably for use in her teaching. This collecting category, however, lacks the representational depth required to make it one of the HLATC's stronger areas. There are no examples of pre-19th century samplers, for example. A small percentage of the HLATC samplers should be candidates for deaccession due to factors like poor condition, authenticity, and quality of design.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. The Wisconsin Historical Society currently preserves a collection of samplers with higher overall quality than the HLATC.

### iii. Finished Textiles: Coverlets

**Description:** The coverlet collecting category comprises complete specimens and coverlet fragments, made by homemakers as well as professionals. There are several above average representations of the major styles spanning the 18th to the early 20th centuries. 39 of 143 total specimens (including fragments) have been attributed to the 1700s.

**Significance:** This collecting category is one of the most requested by researchers and there is potential here for greater campus and community use. The majority of objects in this category were collected by Helen Louise Allen. It is a particularly strong collection for potential exhibition, research, and lending purposes.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** A majority of the coverlets are signed, an element of historical and provenience value. Although coverlets represent a distinctive and historically significant form of American folk art and are of potential interest in terms of technique, workmanship, and iconography, this category requires more research and thoughtful promotion in order to reach its full potential. More curatorial research is currently needed to identify patterns and to verify attribution dates. Investment in curatorial research will help determine if select accessioning or deaccessioning is necessary. Pending the outcome of that research, numerous fragments may warrant deaccessioning.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. Given recommended curatorial research and rationalization and the representative strengths of the coverlet category, any future acquisitions should tell a compelling story distinct from the other coverlets in the Permanent Collection.

## iv. Finished Textiles: Bed Covers

**Description:** The blankets and bed covers collecting category is comprised of bed clothes like blankets and bed sheets but excludes pillow covers as well as the quilts, coverlets, and bed hangings categories that are described elsewhere. There are 135 blankets and bed covers made between 1650 and 1989. India accounts for nearly a quarter of all specimens and African and Mexican traditions are also well represented. There are in addition specimens from Scandinavia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia.

**Significance:** Despite the range of techniques and diverse cultures represented, the bed cover collection is not popular with classes in Textile and Fashion Design and Interior Architecture. In order for usage patterns by students in the Design Studies Program to improve, the recently hired textile historian should assist with research to determine whether and how bed covers and blankets can be added to future visits.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The bed cover category's diversity makes it an especially rich resource for learners wishing to explore the textile traditions of various cultures. Several specimens in this category are still in use by particular ethnic groups and an estimated 40-55 blankets may double as wearing blankets. More research is needed, however, to definitively identify bed covers that can be properly termed wearing blankets. This collecting category is puzzlingly weak in Native American and contemporary blankets.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. An encyclopedic collection of bed covers is not a strategic priority and current and anticipated use patterns do not warrant additional acquisitions. Meeta Sandeep, an external scholar, recently examined for quality of workmanship several of the Indian bed covers and Deaccessions were recommended to make room for more strategic acquisitions. Future collecting in this area should take into account the degree to which new acquisitions can significantly contribute to HLATC's academic reputation or their potential to tell multiple stories, such as an Osage friendship blanket.

## v. Finished Textiles: Rugs

**Description:** There are 135 textiles variously identified as rugs, carpets, or floor covers in this collecting category. The majority (81) come from North America. Of those, 32 were made by Native Americans, including 24 Diné (Navajo) rugs. There are also representative specimens of a wide variety of textile making techniques ranging from India, North Africa and the Near East, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, and Scandinavia. All specimens were made before 1970.

**Significance:** Several important textile-making techniques are represented in this collecting category including tapestry, knotting, sumac, twining, tambour work, hooking, felting, printing, and braiding. The jacquard-woven carpets with their figurative designs are of potential interest to Textile and Fashion Design students studying double and compound weaves and currently one graduate student is focusing on rugs and rug making. Rugs can also contribute to discussions of globalization, fair trade and fair labor, women's rights, colonialism, folk art, and tradition.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The Diné (Navajo) rugs came from the collection of Curtis and Myrtle Busse who concentrated their collecting efforts on contemporary rugs. Their donation came with good provenance and excellent identification, such as artist name and locale. This mid-20th century ensemble has strong exhibition potential, but the Diné sub-category has relatively few historic counterparts and no 21st century examples. Although several important textile-making techniques are represented, this collecting area is currently of low interest to undergraduate students enrolled in Textile and Fashion Design and Interior Architecture classes. Current descriptions in the collections database are inadequate and an investment in photography and research to verify technique is a critical need. The collection does not include any rugs from Latin America and the traditions of North Africa and the Near East are not well-represented.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. Rugs, depending on their size, can quickly fill storage space and can be difficult to bring out for study visits. Given current usage patterns by Design Studies and other classes, no additions should be made at this time. Some of the mid-20th century Diné rugs could be sold and proceeds used to purchase specimens that would tell a more complete story of Diné rug-making traditions. In the future, should new curricular requirements emerge and usage patterns improve, tapestry-woven rugs, a Mexican specialty, could be easily acquired. Additional specimens from the Near East and North Africa could be added to fill out those distinguished rug-making traditions.

## vi. Finished Textiles: Household Textiles Other

**Description:** This collecting category comprises 1114 sundry and eclectic items that were intended for use in the home. Some major sub-categories include (but are not limited to) bed and door hangings (27), carrying and utility cloths (47), cases (15), curtains (52), doilies and antimacassars (362), mats and placemats (357), pillow covers (156), table covers (247), and towels (147). It should be noted that 198 lace doilies and antimacassars 180 paper mats and placemats are excluded from this category and are taken up in the lace and paper collecting categories; if they were included in this collecting area, this would increase this collecting category to a total of 1492 textiles or 11% of the Permanent Collection's holdings. Of special note is a 16-piece collection of Victorian-era embroidered mottos from Germany and the United States. These were sold much like contemporary needlework kits, with a pre-stamped canvas or paper grid and some are framed. The HLATC also has 40 Victorian-era and early 20th century American mourning wreaths made from human hair, feathers, or yarn.

**Significance:** Many individual objects in this collecting category have been pulled for classes in Textile and Fashion Design and Interior Architecture, and for other classes studying global cultures. Recently, faculty and students have expressed some interest in items that showcase women's work or domestic labor. This includes Professor Marianne Fairbanks, who has studied the Collection's towels and 2 graduate students who have studied samplings of table covers, pin cushions, and cases. A faculty member in the Community and Non-Profit Leadership degree program has also expressed some preliminary interest in using table settings to discuss global food cultures. While overall usage is currently low, the addition of a new History of Textiles professor who is highly interested in the various historical and social topics illustrated in this collecting category. Household textiles are frequently undervalued examples of "women's work," which makes them particularly relevant to women's studies applications. These textiles also lend themselves to interesting theoretical and philosophical discussions about craftsmanship and the act of making. They also address issues of commerce, leisure, class, and issues pertaining to the value of domestic labor, a topic that is current and could be leveraged for applications across campus and in the community. In addition, local fiber interest guilds have requested to see the Scandinavian mats, as well as some doilies, and embroidered mottos from this group. The Victorian hair wreaths are frequently pulled for school groups and general tours.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** This collecting category has contributed to the Permanent Collection's reputation with alumni, scholars, and collectors. This is due in part to the fact that the objects were made mainly made for and by women. They are also under-recognized carriers of social, political, and community meaning, and the group of late 19th and early 20th century pillow covers are good illustrations of contemporary artistic styles. In addition, some objects are representative of important techniques. The pillow covers group includes many excellent examples of Arts and Crafts embroidery, printing,



and weaving. As many of the HLATC's household textiles have been used for their intended practical purposes, some of them are only in average to fair condition (most notably, the collection of towels).

**Collecting Recommendation:** Low Growth. There is potential room for growth and for some careful deaccession. Growing the collection of printed mats, table covers, and pillow covers will augment the Collection's large printed yardage collection. However, these potential acquisitions should be evaluated on their overall contribution to the history of printed materials, material culture, ephemera, etc. Another area of potential growth could be in the area of pincushions, sewing cases, and other types of tools. Although similar items currently in the Permanent Collection are recommended for deaccession from the Permanent Collection and transfer to a Study Collection, they have shown to be of interest to a number of recent students. Iroquois beaded pincushions or other like objects should also be considered. Finally, it is unclear why so many Scandinavian mats were collected, most of high significance. It may have been due to luggage constraints or perhaps there is more historic motivation for this decision. These items might be researched more thoroughly and perhaps, reclassified as Fiber Art. Staff should be mindful of changing attitudes towards the exhibition and study of damaged, stained, or mended objects as currently these are of interest to scholars.

## vii. Finished Textiles: Wall Hangings

**Description:** 144 objects by named and unnamed artists from around the world comprise this collecting category. Almost half of the come from the United States and highlights include 17 large block printed wall hangings from the WPA's Milwaukee Handicraft Project, designed to provide emergency relief to the unskilled and unemployed during the Great Depression. Other excellent examples from the United States feature a variety of techniques and embellishments including weaving, printed, embroidered, and lace wall hangings. The next largest group of hangings comes from Central Asia. Other traditions represented include Eastern Europe, India, China and Southeast Asia.

**Significance:** This collecting category is of moderate interest to Textile and Fashion Design classes studying ikat, weaving, printing, and embroidery, but is not popular with Interior Architecture classes. Wall hangings have also been of interest to local fiber arts guilds touring the HLATC. Several of the Milwaukee Handicraft Project prints have been requested by Textile and Fashion Design graduate students doing independent research. The story behind this historic project is compelling and these works would likely be of interest to outside visitors. For example, the Rubiyat wall hanging by Barbara Weissman in the HLATC was a design purchased by Eleanor Roosevelt for her country house. The WPA corpus, in particular, has the potential to attract students from art and art history as it is highly representative of American art in the 1930s and of the highest artistic quality. These works are highly appealing in subject matter and execution, making them good candidates for exhibition. Other American wall hangings could also lend themselves nicely to thematic exhibitions related to fiber art, tapestry weaving, and 20th century art movements. Selections from the non-Western wall hangings group could also be used in exhibitions about culture, technique, folklore, or history. Non-Western wall hangings have been requested or selected for humanities classes studying China, India, and Central Asia.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The wall hangings are of high quality, and are in stable condition. They represent a wide range of styles made by identified as well as unidentified textile artists from around the world. This collecting category augments other collecting categories that illustrate techniques like printing, ikat, weaving, and embroidery. The WPA wall hangings and printed textiles by mid-century American artists are useful for illustrating the history of pattern design and design trends (e.g., color, motif, pattern size) while the Scandinavian textiles represent living traditions still widely practiced today. These items were created by artists of national renown, but also by women of color, immigrants, and those with mental challenges. Some duplication between Midwest collecting institutions exists as regards the Milwaukee Handicraft Project items. The Wisconsin Historical Society, Milwaukee Public Museum, and Goldstein Museum of Art all feature large collections of these prints. This does not mean these organizations are better suited for these objects as these materials complement and augment the HLATC's large collection of printed textiles from the 20th century.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Temporary Moratorium. Before developing this area further, the Design Studies faculty, particularly those from the Textile and Fashion Design Program, should further clarify the reasons for this collecting category. Precise collecting criteria need to be established to meet the needs of classes in technique, classes in costume history, and non-design related classes. Non-Western wall hangings that are visually and historically compelling with the potential to engage students around themes of gender, ethnicity, international trade, and consumption should be given preference over those that are simply good examples of technique. Once strategic gaps have been clearly identified, the category can only be improved with careful, strategic accessions that align with programmatic goals and directly benefit students.

## viii. Finished Textiles: Lace

**Description:** This collecting category comprises 1247 objects, nearly one-tenth of the entire Permanent Collection. The specimens range from garments, garment fabrics, costume accessories, furnishings such as doilies, bookmarks, sachets, and fragments. The objects span nearly 400 years of trends and techniques and comprise both handmade and machine made examples. The largest group of laces is comprised of 337 edgings such as hems, cuffs, or collars of dresses that were worn but removed from their original garments. The next largest group comprises 198 doilies or antimacassars. Object range in date from the 20th (793), to the 19th century (356), the 18th century (19) and the 15-17th century (15).

**Significance:** Although this collecting category comprises diverse objects representative of a wide variety of lace techniques, laces are infrequently requested. Perhaps lace has become so ubiquitous in current society and, therefore, unremarkable that faculty and students tend to dismiss it. Recent efforts by the curator to integrate laces into more pulls have been well received when she provides learners with an understanding of lace's complex history, including the way it was made, who it was made by, how it was sold, how it reflected fashion trends, what it symbolized, etc. Laces have also been used successfully in surface design, fashion illustration, and in the "Cloth to Clothing" courses. One of the obvious connections the HLATC could leverage with its laces is with the Wisconsin Without Borders program that currently works with Mexican lace makers to develop contemporary applications and motifs for sale in the United States. In addition, lace has the potential to be relevant to topics pertaining to history, women's studies, trade and commerce. Lace could also be of interest to art history classes because lace is often used to help determine the date of a historical paintings or other artworks. There has also been some recent discussion amongst the HLATC staff and Collections Committee about whether the lace collecting category might be of interest to math or science courses as lace is created using mathematic principles and resembles natural structures such as crystals.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** A majority of the lace is in a good state of preservation and suitable for education and exhibition use. The HLATC recently acquired some spectacular lace pieces, including an opera coat and several collars that will be displayed in an upcoming exhibition for the HLATC's 50th anniversary. However, it is unclear how well the collection has been properly or completely catalogued as lace is complicated and only a handful of programs teach lace identification. In addition, the HLATC's 2017 CAP assessment recommended rehousing the lace collection by eliminating or replacing the plywood cabinet that contains the lace solander boxes. The laces could be mounted on mat boards with openings to make them easier to access and display.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. Consideration must be given to bringing in an expert to assess the current holdings and their catalog information and to rehousing the collection. Further exploration and development of curricular ties to lace is recommended to justify. The HLATC should also consider deaccessioning some of the machine-made lace.

A small representative sample is important to show the difference between handmade and machine-made lace, but the story the HLATC is best suited to tell involves handmade lace and the people who made/make it. This deaccessioning effort would make room for lace garments (e.g., a lingerie dress) or to fill a gap of 18th and 19th century garment fragments with attached lace elements.

**B.**  
**Finished Textiles:**  
**Costume**

## i. Finished Textiles: Western Costume (Apparel) and Accessories

**Description:** This collecting category has a small representative sample of apparel from the late 19th century, the 1920s, 1960s, and 1970s. Of the 1510 objects classified as accessories 1120 of those are handkerchiefs. The next largest accessory categories are: scarves and shawls (111), bags (72), hats (43), undergarments (29), and socks and stockings (27). Shoes and jewelry are not well represented.

**Significance:** The paisley shawl collection has a good representative sample for this type. As would be expected, apparel and costume accessories are most popular with courses in Textile and Fashion Design. For example, students enrolled in DS 215 (a course devoted exclusively to accessory design) use both Western and non-Western collections of shoes, hats, and bags for inspiration. There is also potential in this collecting category for some object types to be the focus of an exhibition on a construction or fashion history topic. Supplementation with long-term loans for class visits and for exhibitions would help the HLATC tell a more complete and compelling story. Currently the holdings in this collecting category are underutilized by classes outside of textile and fashion design. Apparel and accessories have the potential to facilitate cross-disciplinary discussions around diverse topics, including globalization, sustainability, trade, social status, identity, appropriation, gender politics, and changing social norms. With investment in outreach and promotion, they could, therefore, be of use to courses in history, women's studies, art history, dance, theater, and engineering.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The accessory group is strong with excellent examples of European paisley shawls, printed scarves, hand knit stockings and mittens, bonnets, and beaded bags. Handkerchiefs are the most numerous accessory category and, though many are souvenirs and anonymous designs for the mass market, there are examples by well-known designers such as Tammi Keefe. For the most part, objects in the accessory collecting category are in good condition and highly representative of their era. On the apparel side, the HLATC is not currently capable of telling the complete story of 18th through 21st century fashion. Unfortunately planning and design for new storage facilities did not take into account the preservation needs of Western costume. Potentially costly changes to the new storage space and cabinetry put into use in 2013 is not a strategic priority. Nevertheless, in recent surveys, faculty teaching courses in apparel design said they wished the HLATC had more examples of high-end and ready-to-wear clothing. There also exists a need for mannequins that can accommodate the much smaller proportions of the human figure in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Accessories: No Growth. Apparel: Targeted Strategic Growth Recommended. Given the large number of handkerchiefs in the accessory category, prior collecting in this area appears rather erratic or haphazard. Conversations regarding the

link between accessories, the HLATC mission, and curricular gaps require clarification before additional objects are added to this collecting area. For the collecting category-as-a-whole (apparel and accessories), any new collecting must be of a quantity and type that can be accommodated safely within the constraints of the current storage facility. A highly selective addition of a few apparel specimens could address the current curricular needs of fashion design courses. To maximize limited resources, the HLATC should also pursue long term loans of desirable specimens with the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Goldstein Museum of Art. Criteria that faculty have recently identified for potential acquisitions and loans include a selection of garments that demonstrate the highest technical standards, have unusual cut or silhouette, or are made using unusual materials, construction, or embellishment. To fill strategic gaps, the HLATC should prioritize an additional beaded dress from the 1920s, an 18th century dress, knitwear, men's or women's suits from the 1930s-1950s, a Diane von Furstenberg wrap dress, a pleated Mariano Fortuny gown, and/or garments with interesting pattern design such as those by Emilio Pucci, Zandra Rhodes, or Lilly Pulitzer. Many accessories are appealing for their historical or design qualities rather than their technical qualities. A few specimens are weak in workmanship or construction and could be deaccessioned if they are duplicative or when suitable replacements come available. Additional collecting requirements may also surface when courses in costume history resume in the near future, but the same constraints outlined above should apply. Potentially costly changes to existing storage space and cabinetry would need to be carefully considered to accommodate pieced garments that are best preserved on hangers rather than stored flat.



## ii. Finished Textiles: Western Costume, Folk Dress

**Description:** The Western folk dress collecting category comprises 6 ensembles and 137 objects that are portions of ensembles or accessories (hats, blouses, vests, skirts, aprons, bags, shoes, and fragments of embroidered collars and cuffs, for example). The objects are representative of fourteen European countries, with the majority of objects in this coming from Eastern and Southern Europe: Czechoslovakia (37), Greece (36), and Yugoslavia (20).

**Significance:** Other than their technical attributes that can serve as design inspiration, the main value of these objects is cultural, serving as visual documentation of folk culture. Many of the garments in this collecting category date to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, an era that coincided with the revival of ethnic nationalism. Currently, objects in this category are infrequently requested for design classes. There is an occasional request from patternmaking courses or from students interested in surface design or knitting and interest may increase once textile history courses are more available. With investment in outreach, the materials could also be of moderate to high potential interest for classes in cultural studies, researchers, and community interest groups.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The objects in this collecting category are generally stable and in a good state of preservation, but poorly catalogued. The majority of folk costume objects are women's wear and men's and children's clothing are not represented. Most objects are single and isolated and the 6 ensembles in this collecting category are currently incomplete. This category requires careful research to determine what objects might be grouped together and what objects are still missing from each country currently represented.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. Given low usage patterns and the lack of accurate cataloging in this area, it is difficult to justify additional collecting. The HLATC has not yet reached out to European cultural studies programs on campus to determine if these objects would be of interest to courses outside of the Design Studies Programs and developing this category is premature until further research and outreach clarify the use value of this category. As with the Western apparel and accessory category, there is a need for mannequins to accommodate the much smaller clothing proportions of these objects.

### iii. Finished Textiles: Western Costume, Ecclesiastical Garments

**Description:** 15 of HLATC's 20 ecclesiastical garments are European chasubles and 8 are complete garments, as opposed to fragments.

**Significance:** Age and technique make the garments in this collecting category very important elements of the Permanent Collection. Ecclesiastical garments are frequently used by textile and fashion design courses to illustrate the history of Western dress and to study embroidery and surface design. This category also has potential for use classes in the humanities, like religious studies, or classes studying globalization or the history of trade. One recent art history class studying the decorative arts of the 17th and 18th centuries made use of objects in this category. Because these objects are examples of technological developments in early modern textiles, they lend themselves to discussions of material culture, trade, cultural exchange, and globalization.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The 8 complete ensembles are well-made and in stable condition, both for use in study visits and exhibitions. One of the garments, a velvet chasuble with an embroidered panel on the back (1994.10.001), was scanned with high resolution technology by Sabia, a Japanese imaging company, in 2015. The collecting category is quite small and represents only a small fraction of the different types of garments worn for religious purposes in Western societies.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Low Strategic Growth. Given more critical collecting priorities, the HLATC should not pursue the active development of this category nor aspire to a complete and representative collection of religious dress. Religious garments with rich examples of woven textiles and embellishment should be considered for accession when offered; however, prospects for accession must: 1) fill a strategic gap by illustrating some aspect of Western costume history or 2) represent a historic technique such as surface design or hand weaving that is currently under-represented or missing from the Permanent Collection.

## iv. Finished Textiles: Non-Western Costume (Apparel), Africa

**Description:** This collecting category has 120 garments (e.g., tunics, jackets, pants) and 83 costume accessories (e.g., belts, hats, veils). 122 objects come from North Africa (Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria). 70 come from Sub-Saharan Africa (Ghana, Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Benin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya). Some of the objects from Nigeria and Ghana are likely tourist pieces (e.g., P.R.A.1318, 2004.09.001).

**Significance:** The specimens in this collecting category are representative of a number of important African textile making techniques. Highlights include 41 Coptic fragments with a date range of 300-700 CE, making them some of the oldest objects in the Permanent Collection. African garments are used extensively by Textile and Fashion Design classes studying embroidery, tie-dye, indigo dyeing, stamped resist, weaving, cultural appropriation, and cultural appreciation. The accessories, however, are markedly less popular. African garments are also very popular with Design Fundamentals classes in the Interior Architecture Program. Those students are attracted to and inspired by the bold graphic quality of many African works and adapt these patterns to a class projects in furniture or functional art. Other campus groups that have also utilized this collection include African art history courses and the Wisconsin Archaeology Lab. With additional investment in outreach and promotion, this collecting category has potential relevance to courses and programs in African and Islamic studies.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The African garments are, for the most part, in a good state of preservation and of fine materials and workmanship. Some additional work is required to better identify and catalogue the archaeological fragments and wrappers for some of these pieces may be improperly categorized as apparel. The weakest area in this collecting category is the group from Morocco, which seems to have been assembled by an amateur rather than an informed collector. This collecting category also lacks depth, is incomplete, and represents only a small percentage of African countries. These factors pose barriers to faculty teaching survey classes and to curatorial staff organizing exhibitions. There is duplication in this category's 10 Egyptian shawls and the potential for duplication with two other collections of African textiles on campus: a large collection of African printed textiles at Memorial Library and a study collection in the African Studies program. With the exception of the hats used in costume accessory design courses, the African costume accessories group is unremarkable and less frequently requested for study visits and public tours than other collecting categories.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Temporary Moratorium. Before developing this category further and taking into account duplicative collections elsewhere on campus, the Design Studies faculty, particularly those from the Textile and Fashion Design Program, should

further clarify the reasons for this collecting category. Precise collecting criteria need to be established to meet the needs of classes in technique as well as classes in costume history. The category can only be improved with careful, strategic accessions that align with programmatic goals and directly benefit students. Overall, the addition of more historic costume, examples of higher quality and state of preservation, and under-represented traditions could improve the HLATC's ability to tell more complete and compelling stories from a material culture perspective for a variety of end users. As soon as resources permit, the HLATC should engage experts to survey the collection and to make recommendations for deaccession and accession priorities. This collection could be rationalized and mediocre examples deaccessioned as stronger more representative accession prospects materialize. Should complete ensembles and garments representative of the continent as a whole be desired, new accessions could fill strategic gaps that are present for Central, East, and Southern Africa. Missing examples include beadwork, such as a beaded Dinka vest, Yoruba headdress, Iraqw skirt, or Kuba belt. Islamic textiles might also be accessioned, especially tunics or wrappers inscribed with verses from the Qur'an. Madagascar also boasts a strong weaving tradition and currently the collection does not include anything from that country. There are few examples of contemporary North African textiles and no textiles from Libya or the Sudan, though that region is well known for woven, dyed, and appliquéd garments. Examples of traditional, every day, contemporary, and historic garments are needed from most regions as well as additional examples of ceremonial dress and costume. HLATC should work with campus groups representing duplicative collections to develop accession guidelines for future collecting needs. The African Studies program might also be a resource for transferring deaccessioned objects. Accessories that should be deaccessioned include 7 scarves and 2 veils from Egypt, a dagger and 2 flasks from Morocco, a cap from Nigeria, and several unidentified accessories. In addition, the Moroccan belts, ornaments, and shoes should be critically evaluated. Collecting priorities for accessories includes veils, shoes, hats and headdresses, bags, baby carriers, etc.

## v. Finished Textiles: Non-Western Costume (Apparel), Asia

**Description:** This collecting category has 500 garments (e.g., dresses, jackets, pants) as well as 535 costume accessories (e.g., shoes, hats). Geographical regions with the largest holdings are South Asia (385), China (336), and the Near East (221), Southeast Asia (121) and Central Asia (45). These are further divided into distinct ethnic groups.

**Significance:** This category is frequently used by Textile and Fashion Design students, especially those students just beginning to learn about the textile arts and their significance to communal identity and material culture. Many of the popular items are examples of special textile techniques not found elsewhere, including kalamkari in India, ajrak printing in India and Pakistan, and metal strip embroidery in Iraq. Other techniques are practiced elsewhere but are best known in Asia, such as the intricate kesi tapestry weaving seen in Chinese dragon robes or the elegant kasuri (ikat) weavings in Japanese kimono. Because many of these garments continue to be worn today and are representations of national and cultural identity, they are also popular with classes focused on Asian languages and culture. Some of the most spectacular examples in this collecting category are often pulled for “highlights” tours or other public events and may resonate with interest groups of makers, international students, immigrants, and visitors with Asian heritage.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** This collecting category features several complete ensembles that help to contextualize objects and are good candidates for exhibition. This category does not succeed at representing the extent of historic, regional, and ethnic diversity within the individual regions or nations. Many of the objects date to the 20th century and there is a shortage of historic costume. Condition, range, and quality vary. The holdings from Southeast Asia and Central Asia are comparatively under-represented compared to other Asian regions in the category. This collection is not well documented and research is needed to identify what is relevant to curriculum and why, what is missing, and what may be of inferior quality or duplicative. For example, the HLATC’s Japanese kimono do not demonstrate the full range or best examples of techniques, especially shibori, a typical component of historic kimono. In addition, Hmong and Miao costume from Southwest China and Southeast Asia collected in the late 20th century does not appear to have been collected to support specific curriculum in design studies or other academic programs, but rather to support the particular research interests of Mary Ann Fitzgerald, a former HLATC curator. However, they are excellent examples of several techniques and of communal significance of the large Hmong population in the Midwest, including several students and alumni of the Textile and Fashion Design Program.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Temporary Moratorium. Before developing this area further, the Design Studies faculty, particularly those from the Textile and Fashion Design Program, should further clarify the reasons for this collecting category. Precise collecting

criteria need to be established to meet the needs of classes in technique as well as classes in costume history. The category can only be improved with careful, strategic accessions that align with programmatic goals and directly benefit students. For example, at this time, Textile and Fashion Design faculty have expressed a need to fill strategic gaps in Japanese shibori traditions, but the rationale has not been fully explained. As soon as resources permit, the HLATC should engage experts to survey this collecting category and to make recommendations for deaccession and accession priorities. Textiles from India were surveyed in 2016 by visiting scholar Meeta Sandeep and her recommendations have been recorded and will be taken into account when considering new accession prospects. Should the HLATC decide not to expand into new or underrepresented costume traditions that judgement should also inform deaccession decisions. Overall, to improve the HLATC's ability to tell more complete and compelling stories from a material culture perspective for a variety of end users, the category could be improved by adding objects of higher quality and in a better state of preservation, including examples of historic costume, and under-represented traditions could be developed further.

## vi. Finished Textiles: Non-Western Costume (Apparel), Native American

**Description:** This small collection consists of a Navajo dress fragment, 2 Hopi embroidered skirts, a Seminole patchwork blouse and a Ho-Chunk ribbonwork man's shirt and ribbonwork woman's ensemble of blouse, skirt, and leggings. All of these objects are highly representative of their cultures and are of good quality. In addition, there are 24 costume accessories (e.g., shoes, hats). The accessories come from 11 different tribes: Athapaskan, Southern Tutchone, Nez Perce, Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Zuni, Diné, Acoma, Hopi, Seminole, and the "Habitants" of Quebec.

**Significance:** The very small number of outer garments in this collecting category are of high-quality. The most frequently requested object from this collecting area is the Navajo dress fragment, popular with weaving classes as well as weaving guilds. In general, the category as a whole is not frequently used by students in Textile and Fashion Design and Interior Architecture, most likely due to its small size and failure to capture the diverse range of indigenous peoples. The omission of Native costume from HLATC is puzzling, especially in light of the rich textile traditions of Native people in the immediate area, but this may be due to collections held by the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Milwaukee Public Museum

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The condition of textiles in this collecting category is reasonably good. For example, the Ho-Chunk ribbonwork ensemble was purchased from the maker and is in like-new condition. There is a need, however, for proper cataloguing of Native American objects to make sure the correct tribal names are used (e.g., Ho-Chunk instead of Winnebago, Diné instead of Navajo) and place of origin (e.g., Southwest region instead of Arizona). Several pieces were made for the market or as part of government initiatives like the WPA. Other pieces are somewhat ubiquitous, like the Navajo and Hopi woven belts, but not typically thought of in relation to those cultures.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Low Growth. Given the duplicative collections of the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Milwaukee Public Museum, the Design Studies faculty, particularly those from the Textile and Fashion Design Program, should clarify the rationale for this collecting category. Precise collecting criteria need to be established to meet the needs of classes in technique as well as classes in costume history. The category can only be improved with careful, strategic accessions that align with programmatic goals and directly benefit students. At present, costume is lacking from the Arctic, Pacific Northwest, California, Plateau, Plains, and Woodlands tribal communities and only a few tribes are represented in the Southwest, Southeast, and Great Lakes regions. The HLATC might begin by collecting costume from local Native peoples, concentrating on beadwork, quillwork, appliqué, and embellished trade wool examples. Garments made from hide, fur, or gut should be carefully considered as they are difficult to care for and store. Should the HLATC decide not to expand into new or underrepresented costume traditions, that information should also inform deaccession decisions.



## vii. Finished Textile: Non-Western Costume (Apparel), Oceania

**Description:** There are 96 garments and 49 costume accessories in this collection. A majority of items come from Indonesia: 90 garments and 40 costume accessories. The remaining garments originate from Malaysia, Tahiti and New Zealand and the remaining accessories originate from Fiji, New Guinea, and the Caroline Islands. The costume group is dominated by 86 Indonesian “wrappers” which are representative of several different techniques including batik, ikat, brocade, and embroidery. Also, it should be noted that there are several bark cloth pieces in the collection, but these are categorized as “Paper” and are not discussed here.

**Significance:** This collecting category is popular with Textile and Fashion Design students studying batik resist dyeing and ikat weaving. The woven ikat specimens are also requested by weavers’ interest groups. Batik lends itself to interesting discussions even for groups with little knowledge of the technique because it is easy to explain. Batik items also help to illustrate trade, cross-cultural exchange, cultural appropriation, globalization, etc. Ikats can do the same, though the technique is much more complex.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** This collecting category has good potential for exhibitions, as the objects are in good condition and many of the accessories are finely executed. Spectacular examples of woven ikat from Malaysia and Indonesia and batik are this area’s greatest strengths. Students from UW-Madison’s Indonesian classes and student association are not currently using the collection, but with relationships growing between HLATC and other Asian Studies departments, it is possible that these items will play a more important role with students on campus in the future. The accessory group also features some items made with unusual techniques (e.g., featherwork, knotting) and materials (e.g., feathers, banana fiber, raffia) that help elevate this group. From a costume history perspective, the collecting category is incomplete. There are no complete, representative ensembles from any of the Oceanic countries that include outerwear, jewelry, ceremonial accessories, and head wear. As for technical specimens, there are few examples of traditional Southeast Asian embroidery techniques and no examples of beadwork, tapestry or tie-dye (pelangi or tritik). Objects are incompletely cataloged and extensive handwritten notes have yet to be transferred to the digital database. One of the most obvious problems is the lack of controlled vocabulary as 86 Indonesian “wrappers” are not consistently named. Their pattern motifs are not recorded and the lack of cataloging detail makes it much more difficult to determine the range of objects in this sub-collection and how one “wrapper” differs from the next.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Temporary Moratorium. Before developing this category further, the Design Studies faculty, particularly those from the Textile and Fashion Design Program, should further clarify the rationale for this collecting category. Precise collecting



criteria need to be established for classes in technique as well as classes in costume history. The category can only be improved with careful, strategic accessions that align with programmatic goals and directly benefit students. As soon as resources permit, the HLATC should engage experts to survey the collection and to make recommendations for deaccession and accession priorities. At this time, HLATC does not need to collect additional Indonesian wrappers, but the addition of more complete examples of historic ensembles, examples of higher quality and condition, and under-represented traditions could improve the HLATC's ability to tell more complete and compelling stories from a material culture perspective for a variety of end users. There is an opportunity to diversify the holdings to bring more representativeness to this collecting area and suggested priorities could include examples of beadwork, tapestry, or tie-dye (pelangi or tritik), as well as selected embroideries and complete ensembles that display interesting techniques not as well represented in the current holdings.

## viii. Finished Textiles: Non-Western Costume (Apparel) and Accessories, Central and South America

**Description:** HLATC has 451 garments and 298 costume accessories from Central and South America. The HLATC has garments and accessories from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Mexico. Guatemala accounts for the majority of HLATC's Central American costume (180 of 216) and costume accessories (104 of 180). Peru accounts for a majority of garments from South America (170 of 235) and nearly half of the South America accessories (51 of 118). The Peru group is noteworthy for 109 Pre-Columbian archaeological fragments, some of those including specimens not related to garments, but with indeterminate textile origins, including perhaps costume accessories.

**Significance:** Carnival accessories from Brazil are one of the most interesting groups of objects in this collection. While these do perpetuate unfortunate cultural stereotypes of people from India (Ghandi), they are perfect objects for material culture analysis. These objects can also support diverse topical discussions about tradition, authenticity, globalization, fair trade, and women's rights, to name just a few. However, at the present time this collecting category is the least used of HLATC's non-Western costume and costume accessories for the Textile and Fashion Design program as well as non-design classes in Latin American language, history, and culture. Exceptions to this observation include some individual costume pieces that are sometimes requested for use in embroidery and fashion illustration classes as well as a small number of hats, bags, and that the accessory design classes have requested. The only other accessories from the region that have been pulled in the last 2 years were pulled for external communities. Madison's large and active knitters' guild has made repeated use of some of the knitted objects and the HLATC recently hosted artisans from Ecuador who examined embroideries from the region and beyond. The collecting category is also inexplicably underused by Textile and Fashion Design faculty and students working with Mexican artisans as part of the Wisconsin Without Borders program.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The objects in this collecting category, including the archaeological fragments, are generally in a good state of preservation. The workmanship and technical aspects of many of the costume accessories are remarkable and the fragments include some good examples of complex hand weaving techniques rarely practiced in the United States. Examples in the costume collecting illustrate the evolution of cultural design with some older specimens and newer specimens available for comparison (the HLATC's 11 Mexican huipiles for example). Although some of the objects in this collecting category were made for the tourist market (souvenir bags and belts) many demonstrate skilled craftsmanship and intricate techniques. The costume category, however, is incomplete and includes only 1 ensemble from an unknown Latin American country (C.SA.0037a-b). In the past, the HLATC has organized a number of exhibitions related to its Latin American textiles, most recently in 2016 "Ancient Looms, Modern Threads: Contemporary Handwoven Garments from Oaxaca, Mexico." The HLATC also published a catalogue in 1987 entitled

"Andean Aesthetics: Textiles of Peru and Bolivia." Catalog records are somewhat incomplete and require validation. For example, a very large collection of 151 textiles (not all costume-related) gifted by John and Ruth Morrissey in 1992 is only partially catalogued. Additional research on the HLATC's accessories from the region would boost future exhibition potential if the results could determine what garments the HLATC's accessories would have been worn with and, in some cases, the specific town or community they represent.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Temporary Moratorium. Beloit College's Logan Museum of Anthropology has a large collection of Latin American garments that may be duplicative of the HLATC's collecting efforts. Before developing this category further, the Design Studies faculty, particularly those from the Textile and Fashion Design Program, should further clarify the rationale for this collecting category. The category can only be improved with careful, strategic accessions that align with programmatic goals and directly benefit students. Precise collecting criteria need to be established for classes in technique as well as classes in costume history. For costume, current holdings require an investment in research and proper cataloguing to determine the kinds of objects that could fill critical gaps and successfully represent a broader range of countries from the region.

## C. Finished Textiles: Fiber Art

**Description:** Defining what object types constitute fiber art can vary depending on context and for the purposes of this document this category excludes “art textiles,” or prints designed by artists. However, the HLATC has classified 135 textiles as examples of fiber art. Most (107) of the objects in this category are flat or framed 2D works. An additional 13 objects are 3D, but most lay quite flat for storage. The collection also features 15 wearable art objects. The artist with the most works in this collection (21) is Virginia Tiffany. Tiffany, who graduated from the UW-Madison applied arts program, enjoyed some national success in the 1960s, though she is somewhat obscure today.

**Significance:** The fiber art collecting category has potential for exhibition, scholarly research, and publication because the history of fiber art has received relatively little attention by the academy and by art collectors. The HLATC has a fairly significant collection of early (1950s-1970s) fiber art that, with some concerted effort, could help the fiber art collection achieve national recognition. Perhaps due to their ability to stimulate inquiry and conversation around ongoing political and social movements like feminism, these objects are currently popular with students in both Textile and Fashion Design and Interior Architecture courses, as well as with visiting fiber artists and local interest groups

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The vast majority of the HLATC’s fiber art objects were created in the 1960s, when the category was somewhat formalized by academics as a feminist, craft-centered response to fine art. After Helen Louise Allen’s death in 1968, the fiber art collection did not continue to grow in a deliberate manner and, as a result, the HLATC lacks major works from several key players in the fiber art field. The fiber art collection could be better promoted as a resource for art and art history students as well as local fiber artists and guild members.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Low Growth. Some scholars consider the movement obsolete by the 1980s, but others see the movement extending into the present day via the DIY and wearable art movements, etc. This collecting area requires a significant investment of curatorial effort, not only to fill in the missing pieces, but to collect works by up and coming fiber artists as well. Therefore, collecting in this area should be approached with a degree of caution that takes into current and future resources and weighs collecting in this area against other strategic collecting priorities. Preference should be given to major works by prominent artists in the field like Sheila Hicks and Kaffe Fassett, among others.

## D. Finished Textiles: Basketry

**Description:** There are seven objects in this collecting category and, though some are made to look like baskets, three of the seven objects are carved or crocheted instead of woven. Two of the objects from Africa (F.C.A.0046, D.C.A.0024) have no further identification – no group or country of origin and only one object meets the technical definition of a basket (F.C.PO.0091).

**Significance:** This collection gets very few requests. The objects in this small collection are of limited interest, being visually and technically uninteresting.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** This collecting category lacks even a baseline representative sample of the art of basket making and for that reason strengths were not assigned. Three of the seven objects are carved or crocheted instead of woven. Because the Chazen Art Museum and Logan Museum of Anthropology both collect utilitarian baskets, any collecting of these objects on HLATC's part would be redundant. Although a proposition was made to add examples of fiber art basketry to the Permanent Collection, those types of objects might also still fall within the scope of the Chazen Art Museum and be duplicative.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Recommended for Deaccession. The HLATC's very small, mediocre, and disparate collection of utilitarian basketry makes a poor foundation for an expanded collecting effort in baskets. As these are 3D objects with special housing and storage space requirements, they are a significantly lesser priority than pieced costume (see Section E).

## E. Finished Textiles: Dolls

**Description:** The HLATC has 54 objects in this collecting area. With the exception of 34 paper dolls manufactured in the 1920s, the other objects are not dolls in the traditional sense as playthings, but figurines. 12 Peruvian figurines (2001.01.001-.012) are crude pastiches, created from ancient archaeological textile fragments and sold to tourists. The remaining 8 crudely carved wooden figurines illustrate the Nigerian fiber-to-indigo cloth process (D.C.A.0070a-h).

**Significance:** All of the objects in this collecting category have been utilized in Textile and Fashion Design courses and by a group of students from the Wisconsin Archaeology Lab. Of the three groups, the Peruvian dolls seem to have the most potential as they are useful points of entry for talking about ancient fragments. This means that they, like many of the other dolls and figurines in the collection, are not standalone objects, but vehicles for talking about particular historical or cultural settings.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The Peruvian dolls are interesting objects for teaching about illegal and unethical trafficking in cultural heritage and how mortuary textiles were re-appropriated and transformed for sale to tourists. These objects are not critical resources for curriculum, neither for telling the history of textiles or from the perspective of craft or technique. As a supplementary, contextual collection, the Peruvian and Nigerian figurines have some limited value, but this is not to suggest HLATC should continue to collect dolls for this purpose. The rationale for accessioning the paper doll collection in 2002 is undocumented and the collection does not contribute much to the story of Western fashion. The paper dolls would be much more interesting as part of a larger collection of toys or dolls from the era.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Transfer to Study Collection. There is no clear rationale for these accessioned objects to remain in the Permanent Collection and all are candidates for deaccession. Given the use value of the Nigerian and Peruvian figurines, an option might be to change their status to teaching aids and add them to the Study Collection since they do not require the same standard of care and documentation as objects in the Permanent Collection.

## F. Finished Textiles: Paper

**Description:** The HLATC has 245 nonwoven objects made from cellulosic and synthetic fibers that are not otherwise accounted for. Objects include 32 paper garments, 138 placemats, 18 bark cloths, 18 paper fabric swatches, 1 tablecloth, 1 umbrella, 2 wallpaper swatches, and 1 kit.

**Significance:** This category features excellent examples of paper garments, including 22 paper dresses and 10 garments (most dating to the 1960s), as well as representative examples of bark cloth, a collection of printed placemats, and commercial swatches and other oddities. The paper dresses are very popular with the Textile and Fashion Design program, perhaps due in part to the topic of sustainability in fashion being promoted by faculty. The paper dresses also have widespread appeal with the general public for their novelty and nostalgia.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The group of iconic Pop-era paper dresses is reasonably complete and the crown jewel in this collecting area. The bark cloth collection is in good condition, but inherently fragile, difficult to exhibit, and not representative of the range of cultures who practice this art, such as Hawaiian.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. The disparate character of this category should be rectified and a Study Collection created by the next regular review of the Collections Plan. The paper dresses should be treated as part of the Western costume collection. Other paper objects should be transferred to a Study Collection or deaccessioned. For example, the HLATC has not typically collected commercial swatches, and they are more appropriate for a separate, non-accessioned Study Collection, or perhaps transfer to the Interior Architecture Program's Samples Collection. Another group of historic swatches (W.L.E.2410a-h) are of interest; but, they are mounted to sheets of paper making them difficult to display or study, and may be better suited for a Study Collection under the management of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection staff. As HLATC does not collect kits or yarn, so the "Knit a Paper Bag" kit (2007.06.008) is out of place. It would also be more appropriate for a separate, non-accessioned collection of fibers or yarns.

## G. Western Flat Textiles

**Description:** There are a total of 1518 Western flat textiles in the Permanent Collection. For the purpose of this assessment, all items were counted individually, meaning that a set of 7 swatches counts as 7 objects rather than 1 object with 7 component parts. There are 5 textiles that date to the 16th and 17th centuries, 43 from the 18th, 177 from the 19th, and 1268 from the 20th century. The majority of specimens (1113) come from the United States, 408 from Canada, Europe, and Russia, while another 18 are unidentified, but appear to be Western in origin. 130 apparel fragments were not included in this category as these are most likely garment fragments and are better classified in the costume/apparel collecting areas.

**Significance:** As a majority of the 19th and 20th century flat Western textiles feature printed designs, this collecting category is popular with both Textile Fashion Design and Interior Architecture classes. Although IA classes have used the Textile Collection less frequently than their colleagues in the Textile and Fashion Design Program, select IA faculty with an interest in design history have expressed interest in textiles by well-known designers. This accounts for the broad scope and emphasis on certain important designers like Jack Lenor Larsen and William Morris, and this subset was likely amassed to serve the Interior Architecture Program. With the addition of new courses for design students in the history of textiles, costume, and interior design, this collecting area is likely to see more use as these courses will also be cross-listed for students interested in material culture and art history. As flat textiles are key indicators of their makers' culture, beliefs, and design trends, they may also be useful for history and sociology students engaged in object-based learning exercises created by the HLATC's curatorial staff.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The majority of the objects in this collection are in excellent condition and, therefore, appropriate for both educational use and exhibition. For example, many of the 20th century specimens were collected new. The scope of this collecting category is spectacular with strong potential for attracting local and national researchers. It is worth noting that the HLATC features a number of important fabrics that have not been collected by other museums, such as works by Barbara Brown, Aaron Bohrod, and Ray Komai, among many others. However, it is currently incomplete in terms of cataloguing and photography. For this collection to be properly utilized and grown, manufacturers, at least, must be identified. However, this collecting category is in desperate need of cataloguing and photography to make the objects searchable to those who may want to use it. Most of the yardage features selvages printed with their manufacturers' names and pattern identification titles, but only 523 specimens have artists/manufacturers recorded in the collections database along with only 147 titles. There appear to be some gaps in terms of important 20th century patterns and designers, but these may be rectified once all the textiles have been properly identified and catalogued.



**Collecting Recommendation:** Low Strategic Growth. It is clear that the collection would benefit from additional examples, especially those highly representative of their time. However, the reasons and criteria for collecting in this area need to be further clarified to ensure that the category is developed with an eye towards future use and curricular priorities in both of the Design Studies Programs. Since 2014, there has not been a tenure-track historian in place for the Interior Architecture Program to help provide guidance on curriculum and collecting priorities. That historian position is on hold for the foreseeable future and currently there is only one instructor in the Interior Architecture Program using this collecting category on a regular basis. She is a faculty associate rather than a tenure-track faculty member and uses this category for project inspiration in introductory classes. Should increasing HLATC's profile and reputation as a repository of flat textiles become a strategic priority, however, this collecting category does have strong development potential. Some examples that might strengthen the area include feed sack fabric from the 1930s-1960s, patriotic fabric from the 1940s, "atomic age" fabrics from the 1950s by well-known designers, Pop Art fabrics from the 1960s and 1970s, and small scale floral prints from the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, the collection has not yet added flat textiles from the 1990s to the present.

## H. Non-Western Flat Textiles

**Description:** The HLATC's collection of 247 non-Western flat textiles is small compared to its collection of approximately 1500 Western flat textiles. A majority (163) of the flat textiles come from Asia with approximately half of those coming from South Asia with India representing the bulk of this group (79 out of 81). The South Asian highlights comprise mainly prints and include hand painted and hand printed objects. Other cultures represented are East Asia (28), Southeast Asia (28), and Central Asia (7), Africa (42), the Middle East (28), and Latin America (25). Within this collecting category 81 objects are classified as apparel fabrics. Apparel fragments were not included when there was evidence to suggest that these are fragments of garments rather than yardage, but some generic yardage or fabrics may actually be saris, kains, or wrappers and more research is recommended.

**Significance:** Many objects in this collecting category are used to illustrate technique, including the group of West African dyed fabrics, the Indian printed fabrics, and the Central Asian ikats. A group of 28 Guinean and Nigerian textiles is particularly popular with Textile and Fashion Design classes because these textiles feature numerous examples of print techniques, including stenciling, and painting, screen printing, batik, and tie-dye. The African group also contains several examples of tied fabric samples that show how the tie-dye technique works. 7 of the HLATC's Central Asian textiles are also in demand for illustrating historic and contemporary ikat while ajrak cloths from Pakistan are used to demonstrate the complicated block print technique (1998.11.016a-o). The ajrak cloths and blocks as well as many examples of the kalamkari technique have been pulled repeatedly for classes studying South Asian languages and religion.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** Many of the objects in this collecting category are still in production today, as tourist items or for local use. They are versatile in that they can be relevant to students studying culture as well students focused on design and technique. Good examples include African tie-dyes and African commemorative cloths that are produced in a staggering variety. Another example are the HLATC's three carnival banners and fabrics from Brazil. These objects were used by Afro-Brazilian groups in Brazil to raise awareness for that country's black rights movement, to show kinship with India, and to highlight the movement's doctrine of peaceful resistance. These Brazilian objects, along with related Brazilian carnival costume and costume accessories, make excellent subjects for material culture analysis for students in art history and material culture studies. With the exception of the African commemorative cloths, the Brazilian carnival fabrics, and, perhaps, a number of the Guatemalan fabrics, many objects in this collecting category do not have a great deal of social or religious meaning in their raw form. For instance, the Permanent Collection has many examples of garments made from Central Asian ikat, but only 7 examples of ikat yardage. Since the qualities of this fabric are apparent in any form, the 7 examples of yardage here are likely sufficient for study and do not need to be augmented with additional examples. Some objects in this collecting category have

previously been earmarked for deaccession as they are not high quality examples of textile technique or material culture and would not be appropriate for exhibition. A group of 22 Japanese textiles, for example, are mainly fragments of limited appeal.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Temporary Moratorium. Before developing this category further, the Design Studies faculty, particularly those from the Textile and Fashion Design Program, should further clarify the rationale for this collecting category. Precise collecting criteria need to be established for classes in technique as well as classes from outside of the Design Studies curriculum. Further research on other collections of non-Western flat textiles at other peer institutions may help with providing a rationale. The category can only be improved with careful, strategic accessions that align with programmatic goals and directly benefit students. It should be noted that faculty and staff affiliated with African Studies on campus have amassed a large textile collection that is currently housed in Memorial Library. Called Commemorative Fabrics from Africa, it is likely that this collection will one day be offered to HLATC. Currently it is not clear if that collection duplicates the HLATC's existing holdings. As the HLATC's South Asian textiles were surveyed in 2016 by visiting scholar Meeta Sandeep, her recorded recommendations should be taken into account when considering new accession prospects.

## I. Tools

**Description:** The HLATC has 217 textile-making tools that assist either in the creation of yarn and fabric or the embellishment of fabric. Some highlights include an industrial rotary screen, portable backstrap looms, printing blocks, katazome stencils, embroidery stamps, lace making pillows, and tjanting applicators used in Indonesian batik.

**Significance:** Because the HLATC's collection of tools are important visual and conceptual aids that help tell the story of textile making, they are frequently requested by Textile and Fashion Design courses. But the tools can also help explain incredibly complex textile making processes to non-expert audiences. For example, this collecting category has a set of 4 carved wooden printing blocks and the ajrak shawl they were used for. There are also a pair of Guatemalan portable looms that are complete with warped, and partially woven fabric, and with all pertinent weaving accessories and supplies, including shuttles, shed sticks, and yarn. The printing blocks tell the story of a textile tradition nearly destroyed by industrialization and the development of copperplate and screen printing. Using the blocks to "demonstrate" the complexity of block printing helps non-experts understand why this shift took place. It also helps them appreciate the value textiles once held and to compare that concept with contemporary attitudes and use patterns in this era of fast fashion and disposable goods. In some communities, textiles have been made using the same tools for centuries, so tools help connect contemporary and ancient practices.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** A majority of the objects in this collecting category are in good condition and suitable for exhibition and educational use. Some of the tools are not of the highest quality, however, and better examples could be acquired. The collection includes a winding wheel and spinning wheel that do not appear to be accessioned. It is inadvisable to collect large tools like these, including looms, because a weaving studio is maintained by the Textile and Fashion Design Program in their teaching area. Their size makes these objects less accessible and they consume precious space in storage. These deaccessioned objects should be reclassified and administered by the Design Studies Department's Textile and Fashion Design Program and transferred to their study collection.

**Collecting Recommendation:** Transfer to Study Collection or Deaccession. There are four prospects for deaccession and disposal: a "Navajo" loom made for tourists (W.F.US.1589) and 3 paper sewing patterns that might be better cared for as archival objects. The HLATC should consider creating a study collection of "teaching aids" as tools are useful for illustrating the textile making process. The HLATC could also consider adding specimens of better and more representative quality and extend HLATC study collection's scope to include additional examples of fiber, yarn, and dye stuff to better tell these types of stories. These new materials need not be accessioned but might be added as part of a new hands-on study collection.

## J. Technical Textiles

**Description:** HLATC does not currently have any examples of technical textiles, which might be characterized as specialty textiles made for industry. These might include protective, medical, or geotextiles as well as textiles that, for example, facilitate the generation or transmission of energy. “Wearable tech” also fits into this subcategory.

**Significance:** Some Textile and Fashion Design faculty have expressed interest in technical textiles and prototypes of wearable technology; however, the rationale, scope, and collecting criteria should be defined. Technical textiles might indeed be very relevant, not only to the current educational landscape, but to the future of the design field; however, technical textiles pose challenges related to preservation and to obsolescence. Currently, the Design Studies Program does not offer any regular courses or degrees in industrial design. If technical textiles and wearable tech prototypes were offered, these kinds of materials would be better administered as part of the Design Studies Program’s Sample Room Collection where other industrial samples are kept for the Interior Architecture Program.

**Strengths and Weaknesses:** The concern for all technical textiles is the ability of the HLATC to preserve them or maintain their technology in working order. Technical textiles, depending on their materials, may pose challenges to their long-term preservation and may require special housing that isolates volatile material from other, more traditional, textiles.

**Collecting Recommendation:** No Growth. Currently, technical textile or product development is not taught in the Textile and Fashion Design department. There is no curatorial or collections management expertise to handle these emerging materials, and as this collections plan shows, there are many other collecting categories that require attention in order to improve access. Should the Design Studies Department decide to establish a collection of technical textiles (understood here as finished products and/or swatches of industry grade materials), it is recommended that the collection be delegated to the Design Studies Department to administer. To ensure ease of student access, the technical textiles collection could reside in the Design Studies Department’s Sample Room.

# Appendix One: Summary of Accession Standards

Before an object becomes a part of the Permanent Collection, the HLATC staff exercises due diligence to conform to the procedures and processes outlined in its Accessions Collections Policy. In keeping with its public trust responsibilities for the long-term care and stewardship of its holdings, the growth of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection stays abreast of and takes into account relevant state, federal, and international laws, as well as professional standards for the sustainable and ethical management of its cultural resources.

1. The object is relevant to and furthers the stated mission, purpose, and activities of the HLATC.
2. The object fills a strategic gap or aligns with a collecting priority that has been identified in the HLATC's most current Collections Plan.
3. There are sufficient personnel and financial resources available to properly register, store, care for, and ensure public access to the object.
4. The object has been legally acquired and its provenance history well-documented. The HLATC will not accept material that jeopardizes its public reputation, the professional reputation of the HLATC staff, or the parent organization the UW-Madison.
5. The HLATC's acquisition of the object complies with relevant codes of ethics for museum professionals and with local and international laws with regard to the transfer of cultural heritage and the protection of flora and fauna.
6. The object is not encumbered by any donor restrictions and the HLATC is free to manage, use, display, or dispose of the donation.
7. The object is genuine, is properly identified, and has strong provenance.
8. The object does not duplicate existing holdings, but is unique and of supreme intellectual value worthy of acquisition.
9. The object does not pose an unacceptable hazard to personnel or other collection items; its condition can be made suitable with resources at hand; and the object is suitable for handling, research, and exhibition.

Information about these accession standards as they relate to the HLATC's accession policy and procedures appear in the relevant section of the HLATC's collection management policy.

## Appendix Two: Key Terms

- **Accession:** an administrative process that accepts legal title to an object by formally recording it as part of the Permanent Collection.
- **Deaccession:** an administrative process that formally removes an object from the Permanent Collection. Deaccessioned objects are no longer subject to the highest level of care and security.
- **Description:** for a Collecting Category, details such as number of objects in that category, dates, materials, techniques, etc.
- **Disposal:** the administrative process for a deaccessioned object's physical mode of removal from the organization.
- **Center for Design and Material Culture:** the administrative structure responsible for administering the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection, the Lynn Mecklenburg Textile Gallery, and the Ruth Davis Design Gallery. The CDMC is one of five Centers of Research Excellence with the School of Human Ecology.
- **Collections Committee:** a standing working committee appointed by the Dean of the School of Human Ecology that reviews proposed acquisitions and provides guidance to the HLATC staff on curricular and outreach issues that have bearing on the development and refinement of the Permanent Collection.
- **Collecting Category:** a framework used to group or classify textiles with shared characteristics.
- **Collecting Recommendations:** an explanation based on previous analysis, as well as whether or not growth or deaccession is recommended in a particular area.
- **Finished Textile:** for the purpose of this assessment, a finished textile refers to a broad category that includes many object types, including the HLATC's modest fiber art category. Finished textiles can range from examples of costume or apparel and costume accessories from around the world, samplers, laces and trims, quilts, and coverlets. It also includes finished objects or fragments used to furnish household living spaces like wall hangings and pillow covers.
- **Flat Textile:** for the purposes of this assessment, a flat textile is essentially yardage – fabric as raw material. This category encompasses furnishing fabrics for drapery and upholstered furniture, generic yardage or apparel fabric, and fragments.

- **Friends of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection:** individuals that make an annual \$75 gift through the UW Foundation to the Helen Louise Allen Collection Fund.
- **Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection Volunteer Committee:** a committee organized by the School's Senior Development Officers at the UW Foundation. Comprised of emerita faculty, alumni, and supporters of the HLATC, the HLATC Volunteer Committee provides guidance on community outreach to the HLATC staff and SoHE Dean and organizes fundraisers and stewardship events.
- **Permanent Collection:** Permanent Collection objects are catalogued to the highest professional standards and receive the highest level of care and security. They comprise the core research and teaching collection.
- **Stakeholder, external:** off-campus audiences and communities including UW-Madison alumni, donors, and other educational and community organizations including local and regional schools and textile interest groups, guilds, and associations.
- **Stakeholder, internal:** UW-Madison on-campus audiences and communities with an interest in the mission and activities of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection. These include but are not limited to faculty, students, and staff in the School of Human Ecology, SoHE's Design Studies Department, the Material Culture Studies Program, and other campus research centers and outreach programs.
- **Strengths and Weaknesses:** for a Collecting Category, an assessment that may refer to holdings and their state of preservation; their representativeness; completeness; rarity or uniqueness; curricular relevance; potential to generate revenue through exhibition and publication; the extent of duplication; and resources required for long term care including available storage space.
- **Tools:** for the purposes of this assessment, a tool is any equipment that might be used to produce, finish, or otherwise manipulate fiber, yarn, flat textiles, or finished textiles. This could include equipment for dyeing, embellishment, printing, sewing, twining, weaving or objects that assist with fiber consolidation, fiber procurement, yarn production, or textile finishing.
- **Valuation:** an assessment process used in rationalizing collections. The process applies qualitative and semi-quantitative criteria to collection in objects order to determine their historical, socio-cultural, and use value to HLATC's stakeholders. The central purpose of HLATC's valuation is to identify Collecting Categories and object types that have demonstrated relevance to the teaching mission and are esteemed by stakeholders. Standard criteria include object condition, provenance, ensemble value, artistic value, information value, etc. HLATC's valuation process does not typically involve researching market or insurance values.



## Appendix Three: Process for Developing this Document

This inaugural Collections Plan is the result of four years of sustained dialogue with HLATC's diverse stakeholder communities. The process began in 2013 when the Dean of the School of Human Ecology, Soyeon Shim, appointed Terry Boyd, UW-Madison faculty emerita in design history, to organize and oversee a series of internal and external reviews. Focus groups for these reviews included participation by key staff in the School of Human Ecology's administration, including the Advancement Team and the School's UW Foundation Development Officers, Design Studies faculty and students, Art History and Material Culture studies faculty, annual donors, including the Friends of the HLATC and volunteers who assisted with the 2012-2013 rehousing of the Collection and went on to serve as active members of the HLATC's Volunteer Committee. In 2016, the HLATC Director Sherry Harlacher worked with the SoHE Dean to convene a Collections Committee to work with the HLATC's professional staff to update the HLATC's mission, vision, and collecting priorities. The Committee and staff organized faculty surveys and in-person interviews to gather input from the Textile and Fashion Design Program and the Interior Architecture Program on collections access and usage. This qualitative data was supplemented by usage statistics that identified visitor type, purpose of collections use, the most popularly requested textiles, and relevant curricular connections.

From May-September 2017, Director Harlacher charged the HLATC Curator/Collections Manager Natasha Thoreson to undertake an assessment of the Permanent Collection. The HLATC's staff developed a valuation framework based on the recommendations of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (see Appendix Six). Monetary valuation was excluded from the framework as this kind of assessment lies outside of staff training and expertise. The central purpose of the valuation was to identify collecting areas or categories with demonstrated relevance to the HLATC's teaching mission and to review the object types that are esteemed by various stakeholder groups. The HLATC staff then applied qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess each Collecting Category and to identify opportunities for value development. Some key considerations were the degree to which: 1) the collecting category provides the optimal use value for students and current curriculum; 2) the collecting category provides exhibition value and the potential to attract revenue support; 3) the composition of the collecting category balances current and future needs. For a full description of the criteria employed, see the Appendix. The HLATC Director, in consultation with the Curator/Collections Manager, took the results of the faculty surveys, user statistics, and collections assessment to draw up a five-year Collections Plan and to identify strategic accession and deaccession priorities.

## Appendix Four: Historical Overview of the Collection

### A. Origins

The Collection is named for Professor Helen Louise Allen (1902-1968) who, for more than 40 years, taught UW-Madison students weaving, embroidery, and the history of textiles and interiors. Professor Allen devoted herself to the study of textiles from around the globe. She traveled the world researching diverse textile techniques and meeting artisans. To better understand the cultural and historic significance of the textile medium, Professor Allen adopted an ethnographic approach to the study of textiles and amassed a teaching collection for instruction in textile-related domestic arts. Professor Allen's core commitment to promoting both the cultural and historical significance of textiles and engaging with global artisan communities persists as a core value. Professor Allen bequeathed her 4,000-item textile collection to the School, along with her archives and book collection. This donation formed the basis of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection.

Following Helen Louise Allen's passing in 1968, her protégé and colleague Ruth Ketterer Harris (1910-1990) was appointed the Collection's first curator. Ruth K. Harris was a weaver and scholar with a passion for the study and creation of textiles. When Professor Allen was alive, Ruth accompanied her on several research trips and together they were founding members of the Madison Weavers Guild and the Wisconsin Designer Craftsmen Society. Ruth was also a mentor and inspiration to many, including Kathleen "Katie" Orea Sweeney, a local collector who established the annual Ruth Ketterer Harris Memorial Lectureship in Ruth's honor. Successive curators and Design Studies faculty each brought individual expertise and personal research interests to developing the Permanent Collection, which eventually grew to nearly 14,000 objects. In 2012, textile historian Professor Beverly Gordon retired from teaching and there has been a gap in the curriculum in the area of textile and costume history up until 2017. In 2018-2019 academic year, Dr. Marina Moskowitz is expected fill this gap as the inaugural Lynn Mecklenburg Endowed Chair of Textiles, Material Culture, and Design. Under her tenure in the Design Studies Department, classes in textile and design history are slated to resume.

For decades, the Textile Program included a focus on making clothing and there were periodic efforts to reorganize curriculum to prepare students for careers in ready-to-wear apparel and fashion design. For example, the Program added an option for students in their senior year to study at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. This opportunity, and the presence of a Western costume collection nearby at the Wisconsin Historical Society and another at the University of Minnesota's Goldstein Museum of Design exerted some pressure on the HLATC not to divert its scarce resources to build a representative historic costume and couture collection.

Following the 2013-2014 internal and external review process, the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection was subsumed, along with the Ruth Davis Design Gallery, into a new Center for Design and Material Culture, one of the School of Human Ecology's Centers

of Research Excellence. The launch of the Center for Design and Material Culture in 2015 and the subsequent hire of professional staff with experience in collections stewardship engendered a new governance structure. The Center launched a series of strategic planning efforts, including converting the existing Lynn Mecklenburg Reading Room into a dedicated textile exhibition space. Center curatorial staff will organize exhibitions from the Permanent Collection in the new gallery and aspire to co-curate exhibitions not only with Design Studies faculty and students, but also with other academic programs whose students have an interest in textiles and curatorial practice.

## **B. Key Stewards**

1. The Pleasant Rowland Distinguished Director of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection serves as executive director of the Helen Louise Allen Textile Collection and the Center for Design and Material Culture. The Director reports directly to the Dean of the School of Human Ecology.
2. A Curator/Collections Manager and a Communications Specialist, the Ruth Davis Design Gallery's Director and the Gallery's Preparator collaborate on exhibitions. These professional staff members report to the HLATC Director.
3. The HLATC professional staff actively consults with the HLATC Collections Committee.
4. Design Studies members appointed to the HLATC Collections Committee represent the interests of the Textile and Fashion Design and Interior Architecture Programs.
5. An appointee to the Collections Committee represents the interests of alumni, HLATC supporters and Friends, and other community patrons.

For more in-depth information on authority and governance, refer to the Center for Design and Material Culture's Governance Document and the Collections Policies.

# Appendix Five: Valuation Template

## General Process Guidelines

**Reason for valuation:** To conduct a collections assessment and subsequently develop a collections plan

**Question behind valuation:** 1) Does it provide optimal use value for students and curriculum?; 2) Does it also provide the most public use value (exhibition/revenue)?; 3) Does it balance current and future needs?

**Reference framework for valuation plus arguments:** Demonstrate that objects have relevance to teaching mission; Comparisons are made to objects in the collection that are known to be esteemed by our users for teaching and inspiration; Determine value to various stakeholders.

**Date:**

**Conducted by:**

**Collection category/subcategory  
being evaluated:**

**General assessment:**

**Statement of significance<sup>1</sup> for  
this category/subcategory:**

| Criteria | Criteria                          | Prompt Questions  | Low | Med. | High |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---|-----|------|------|
| Use      | Education and research (internal) | • Is it popular with TFD classes?   |     |      |      |
|          |                                   | • Is it popular with IA classes?  |     |      |      |
|          |                                   | • Are there additional niches or narratives that this object can fill beyond technical or cultural association? |     |      |      |
|          |                                   | • Can it do double duty for another class/department?   |     |      |      |
|          | Exhibition/ Financial (external)  | • Does its presentation or exhibition attract revenue?  |     |      |      |
|          |                                   | • Does it attract outside visitors?   |     |      |      |
|          |                                   | • Does it play a decisive role in HLATC's profile and reputation and with whom?                                 |     |      |      |
| Notes    |                                   |   |     |      |      |

<sup>1</sup> The final statement of significance articulates and substantiates values in such a way that it can also be used directly as a communications tool, for example when submitting a grant application.

# Appendix Five: Valuation Template

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Features   | Condition  | • Is the object in good condition?   |  |  |  |
|  |  | • If an ensemble, does it have all of its parts?   |  |  |  |
|  |  | • Is it suitable for exhibition and educational use?   |  |  |  |
|  | Provenance<br>(makes notes below if this information becomes accessible) | • Does it have all of its documentation: legal, life story, biography, date/geographical information, source, etc.?  |  |  |  |
|  |  | • Is this information reliable?  |  |  |  |
|  | Representativeness<br>(and rarity)                                       | • Is this collection complete?   |  |  |  |
|  |  | • If a collection, does it fully represent all of its type? If an object, is it a significant representative sample? |  |  |  |
|  |  | • Is the object/collection redundant within the institution?   |  |  |  |
| • Is the object/collection duplicating efforts/missions better fulfilled by nearby institutions? |  |  |  |  |  |
| Notes  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cultural-historic  | Artistic/Technical   | • Does this object/collection represent an important artistic/design element, style, or period?                      |  |  |  |
|  |  | • Does it display important aspects of workmanship or technical qualities?   |  |  |  |
|  | Historical   | • Is there an important association with a particular culture, place, event, or time period?                         |  |  |  |
| Notes  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Social/Emotional   | Social/cultural  | • Does it have current social, religious, political, community meaning, and for whom?                                |  |  |  |
|  |  | • Is this object/collection currently used by any group?   |  |  |  |

## Appendix Five: Valuation Template

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| Notes |  |
|-------|--|

| Stakeholders (Rank value for each stakeholder on a scale of 1-5) |                          |                         |      |  |  |                            |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|------|--|--|----------------------------|
|  | TFD Faculty and students | IA Faculty and students | SoHE | Campus Partners (History, Women's Studies) | Interest Groups (Mad City Quilt Guild) | Other (VIP donors, alumni) |
| Actual Use   |                          |                         |      |  |  |                            |
| Potential Use  |                          |                         |      |  |  |                            |

## **Appendix Six: Collections Valuation Article**

Cultural Heritage Agency. Assessing Museum Collections: Collection Valuation in Six Easy Steps. Amersfoort: Netherlands, 2014. (ISBN978905992247)



Cultural Heritage Agency  
*Ministry of Education, Culture and Science*

# Assessing Museum Collections

Collection valuation in six steps







# Assessing Museum Collections

Collection valuation in six steps

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# Introduction

Value is a key concept within heritage care. Things that are perceived as valuable will be used and re-used, cherished or preserved, whereas things to which we attach no value are neglected, discarded or destroyed. But the precise meaning of ‘value’ cannot be captured in just a few words. In fact, it is a particularly tricky term that can mean very different things – from price, esteem and utility to outcomes, significance and revenue. When we talk about ‘valuing’ in relation to heritage we mean making reasoned, verifiable statements about its value. We need to elucidate the value assigned to heritage in order to guide the way we preserve, develop and use this heritage, as well as to engender public support for it. Until now such valuation has been almost the exclusive preserve of professionals such as art and architectural historians, archaeologists, archivists, librarians and historians. In museums, this task has chiefly fallen to curators, who tend to express valuation in scientific or culture historical terms. But the world is changing – politically, economically and socially – and so too is the way we view heritage and valuation. Ideas about *who* values heritage are also subject to change.

This is why the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE) has developed a new six-step system for assessing museum objects and collections, one that allows scope for changes in valuation. So what is new about this method? The new-style valuation assumes that there is always a motive for a valuation, and that there are various possible perspectives from which to assess a collection. The method highlights new and current valuation criteria and

describes how value scores should be underpinned by arguments. The criteria identified – such as condition, ensemble value, provenance, artistic value, information value and perception value – are classified into four main groups. One relates to the item or collection’s formal features, such as provenance, condition and rarity or representativeness. By making an assessment against these criteria we arrive at a description, although not yet at a valuation. The other three groups of criteria relate to three value domains: culture historical (the traditional ‘expert values’), social and use value. Although these three groups are in principle of equal value, users may impose their own hierarchy if they so wish. In order to be considered part of cultural heritage, an item or collection must satisfy at least one ‘culture historical’ criterion.

The method outlined in *Assessing museum collections. Collection valuation in six steps* elaborates on earlier valuation methods and criteria. There are some significant improvements, however. The new method:

- can be applied at **different levels**: individual items, subcollections and entire collections
- can be applied to **different types of collections**: art history, cultural history, history, ethnology, natural history, technology, academic, maritime, etc.
- describes the **valuation process** step by step
- provides an opportunity to define a **reference framework** and to identify the stakeholders
- keeps the number of **criteria** to a minimum while still covering all relevant aspects of value
- considers not only culture historical values, but also **social and societal and use values**

- can be applied to both a **qualitative** valuation (a statement of significance) and a **semi-quantitative** valuation (a ranking such as 'low', 'medium', 'high')
- can be used to identify **development potential** (opportunities for value development).

Knowledge is indispensable for arriving at a meaningful valuation. The new method accepts that professionals – such as curators, collection managers, educational and PR staff and restorers – are not the only ones who possess knowledge about museum objects and collections. This knowledge is also held by others, by non-professionals such as members of the public, patrons, lenders, enthusiasts, tourists and 'ordinary people'. In today's world, 'experts' are no longer viewed as the sole authority on the value of heritage. Similarly, collection highlights don't always occupy centre stage, but increasingly make way for the story and the people behind the object. It is therefore useful if the members of a valuation team come from different backgrounds and can contribute different kinds of knowledge. A multidisciplinary team can help to cultivate a more nuanced view of the collection.

This document makes a distinction between 'value', 'criteria' and 'significance'. Value includes the historical, artistic, economic, emotional, scientific, social and community values that can be assigned to an item or collection. Each 'value' is determined by the degree to which the item or collection meets certain 'criteria'. In other words, an item has artistic value if it is special by virtue of its style or design or if it represents an important artist or art movement. It is the *combination* of all these values – from historical to community value – that makes up the 'significance' of an item or collection. The notion of 'intrinsic value' does not appear in this new methodology. This is because an item does not have a fixed value that can be measured objectively. It is we, those who carry out a valuation, who assign value to an item or collection. Significance is something that is 'made'.

*Assessing museum collections* sets out the new approach to valuation step by step. In this way those who use it will gradually arrive at a clear appreciation of the

value of an item or collection. You will discover as you go that valuing can at times be problematic. It can give rise to doubts and dilemmas or bring to light irreconcilable views. Take for example the contested heritage value of the Netherlands' past as a slaving nation or the value of war monuments commemorating German victims. There is no doubt that there is plenty of fuel for discussion here. The final outcome of a valuation can be utilised in different ways. It represents the starting point and rationale for new decisions or actions. It answers the question that is asked about the items or collection at the start of the valuation.

It is important, finally, that the values assigned to items or collections are not set in stone. Ideas can change over time and a valuation is simply a snapshot. Several years down the track, and perhaps for a different occasion, a collection may need to be valued once again.

# Why conduct a valuation?

Professionally managing a museum collection involves making choices. Which items should be exhibited? Which ones should be restored, given additional protection or even reallocated? A collection manager has to weigh up the various museum objects when apportioning budgets. The same applies when submitting a grant application or drawing up an evacuation list. The cultural value of museum objects plays a key role here. Nowadays increasing emphasis is placed on an item or collection's use value, emotional value and community value. Collection managers arrive at well-considered decisions by exploring, articulating and making a case for all these values. Communicating values also plays a vital role in engendering public support for the preservation of collections.

Valuing involves making reasoned, verifiable statements about the value of an object or collection in response to a question, on the basis of previously established and defined criteria, within an appropriate reference framework and for specific stakeholders.

Collection management is the strategic deployment of people and resources to ensure that the collection is optimally used, preserved and developed.

## A step-by-step valuation

*Assessing museum collections. Collection valuation in six steps* is a practical guide for assigning value to items, parts of collections or entire collections. It is aimed at anyone engaged in the professional management

of a collection. By going through the process step by step, you can use the outcome to underpin your museum's remit, to communicate the significance of your collection and to better fulfil your professional role as collection manager. A valuation can also serve as a basis for collection policy and planning. It helps you to assess the relative values of museum objects and collections, to make decisions about interventions and to talk about conflicting interests. It can also make the stories behind the collection more accessible, boost visitor engagement with the collection and explain why museum items and collections deserve protection and care.

The Amsterdam flower market



## From Nightwatch to Flower Market

The city of Amsterdam, its restaurants and hotels, benefit financially from places like the Rijksmuseum. This is because tourists who come to admire Rembrandt's *Nightwatch* may then go on to take a canal boat tour, to visit the Flower Market or the Anne Frank House.

## Value in collection management – a model

Collection management – activities that are part of professionally managing a collection – falls into three categories: use, preservation and development (see the collection management triangle in Fig. 1). The *use* of a collection involves among other things exhibiting, lending or making reference to objects (e.g. reading an archival document). It also includes examining items for the purposes of presentation, loan or publication. *Preservation* covers activities relating to the management of items, such as registration, conservation and ensuring optimum storage conditions (e.g. storing drawings in an acid-free box, regulating the climate in a depot, keeping the collection dust-free). And *development* involves enriching the collection, for example through acquisition or further historical, art historical, anthropological or material research.

The value assigned to a collection plays a key role in these three activities.

In terms of use, a museum does something with this value, including it in the permanent display, in publications or in temporary exhibitions. Preservation limits an item's loss of value by counteracting its inevitable physical deterioration. Development, on the other hand, adds value in that more knowledge is gathered and then shared with other museums, art historians, researchers and the public at large. New insights can also lead to a reduction in value, for example, when an item believed to be authentic turns out to be a fake. A collection's

*accessibility* is vital in all of this. If you can't access the items, you can't do anything with them. This applies to both physical and virtual access (e.g. digitised photos on the internet) and to the knowledge associated with an item. Value therefore plays a greater or lesser role in all collection management activities. In fact, collection management is all about 'managing values'. Most important of all is articulating and communicating why items and collections are significant.

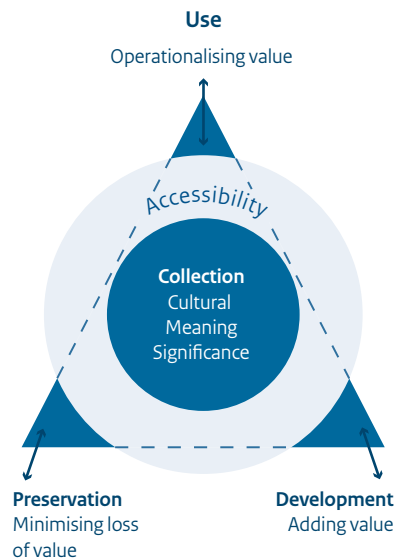


Figure 1. The collection management triangle

## Financial and economic value

A collection valuation has no bearing on a collection's financial value. When an item is added to a museum collection, it is removed from the market place. Having the status of museum object implies that it is no longer a marketable commodity and therefore has no market value. Of course, it may be assigned a financial value – established by a registered valuer – for insurance purposes. While this insurance value does bear a relationship to the assumed market value, it is not

the same thing. A new situation arises if a museum decides to reallocate an item. If other museums are not interested in the object, selling it is a possible form of disposal, in which case it will re-enter the market and can be assigned a financial value. This publication does refer, however, to the criterion of economic value. This is not the financial value, but the extent to which an item or collection helps to generate revenue for the organisation, municipality or region.





Steam Tram  
Museum Hoorn-  
Medemblik. Photo  
R. Korthof

### Steam Tram Museum Hoorn-Medemblik

When mobile heritage is still 'active' and original rolling stock is still in use, it may have a high economic value. The Steam Tram Museum Hoorn-Medemblik organises special rides and events throughout the year that spotlight – and derive income from – the history of steam locomotion in the Netherlands.

### Advantages

The method described in *Assessing museum collections. Collection valuation in six steps* builds on earlier valuation methods and criteria. There have been some significant improvements, however. The new method:

- can be applied at **different levels**: individual items, parts of collections and entire collections
- can be applied to **different types of collections**: art history, cultural history, history, ethnology, natural history, technology, academic, maritime, etc.
- describes the **valuation process** step by step
- provides an opportunity to define a **reference framework** and to identify the stakeholders
- keeps the number of **criteria** to a minimum while still covering all relevant aspects of value
- considers not only culture historical values, but also **social and use values**
- can be applied to both a **qualitative** valuation (a statement of significance) and a **semi-quantitative** valuation (a ranking such as 'low', 'medium', 'high')
- can be used to identify **development potential** (opportunities for value development).

### Earlier valuation frameworks

Criteria for valuing museum items and collections have been developed in the Netherlands in the past. The first time was in 1984, when a valuation framework was drawn up in connection with the new Cultural Heritage Preservation Act (WBC). The Act aims to prevent privately-owned items of national significance from disappearing abroad. A list of significant items accompanies the Act and valuation criteria were drawn up at the time to determine whether a particular item or collection belonged on the list.

These criteria also served as a basis for the valuation criteria in the Delta Plan for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage, a major rescue operation for Dutch collections. Under the Delta plan, the State made vast sums available to deal with backlogs in collection management and preservation (such as unregistered items and poor storage conditions). As only the most important collections were eligible for subsidy, four categories were introduced to enable comparisons across collections in terms of value. Categories A and B were regarded as the top and 'subtop' of Dutch cultural heritage, C as supporting the museum's objective and D as not in keeping with the collection. The reference framework was the 'Netherlands Collection', a new concept to refer to all public collections in the Netherlands.

Another derivative of the Delta plan system was the Museum Inventory Project (MUSIP), carried

out from 1997 to 1999. It involved inventorying and valuing museum collections at subcollection level *for each province*. The main difference is that MUSIP valuations were conducted at the level of *individual institutions*, whereas the 'Netherlands Collection' was the reference framework for the Delta plan. Specific criteria based on these two methods were then developed for natural history collections, rail heritage, photo collections, among others.

Of more recent date are *Hulpmiddel voor de culturele waardering van historische interieurs* (Guide to the Cultural Valuation of Historical Interiors, 2010) and *Guidelines on Ways of Dealing with Religious Objects*, 2011), which were inspired in part by *Significance 2.0* (2001), an Australian valuation guide. Drawing up a statement of significance is central to that method. A statement of significance is a concise, reasoned summary of the values that an item or collection has for particular stakeholders. It is prepared in response to a question, on the basis of previously established and defined criteria, and within an appropriate reference framework. A key aspect of this statement is its focus on *why* something is of value. The final statement of significance articulates and substantiates these values in such a way that it can also be used directly as a communications tool, for example when submitting a grant application.

### Who assigns value?

Knowledge is indispensable for arriving at a meaningful valuation. The knowledge required depends on the question being asked and the purpose of the valuation. Museums have in-house knowledge, with curators, restorers, presentation and exhibition staff, PR & marketing staff and registrars. But a good deal of knowledge can also be found outside museums – among collectors, visitors, patrons, enthusiasts and authors of books on cultural heritage.

Allowing different stakeholders to bring their own specific knowledge to a valuation will result in added value. These stakeholders could be professionals or non-professionals. 'Experts' are no longer seen as the only ones who should decide on the value of heritage. Increasingly, via the internet and other media, museums are asking the public – as groups or individuals – to document their own culture and history.

Working as a team on the valuation method outlined here can generate a greater wealth of information and produce a more nuanced outcome. This is because the collection is viewed from different perspectives. Case studies have shown that working as part of a multidisciplinary team helps to develop a shared view of the collection. Team members often come to the process with their own interests regarding the collection and end up speaking a 'common language'. A shared valuation process will also foster support for any subsequent decisions that might have to be made.

**Suggestion.** When carrying out a team valuation, you should appoint a neutral facilitator to guide the process as this will allow team members to focus on matters of substance. The facilitator can monitor progress and ensure that all the steps are carefully worked through. There is always a risk of straying off topic because of the complex issues involved and the scope for widely divergent views.

**Suggestion.** If a shared approach is required but you have neither the time nor the staff numbers to go through the entire valuation process as a team, you can start by filling in a few valuation forms together, as a trial. If there is agreement about the approach, you can then continue the valuation with fewer people, just one or two if need be.

**Suggestion.** If the museum staff do not have all the knowledge required to conduct the valuation, or if they would like an outsider's perspective, it is a good idea to involve outside experts and/or stakeholders in the process. This is particularly important if the reason for the valuation is to make reallocation decisions. It is important to identify which experts and stakeholders should be involved, what knowledge they should bring to the valuation and what their interest is in the collection. This will then make it possible to reconstruct retrospectively how the valuation was arrived at and from what perspective.

Experts from Amsterdam's Office of Monuments and Archaeology (BMA) were called in to help value the Willet-Holthuysen Museum collection. Their knowledge of the house's construction history and interiors proved a useful complement to that of the museum staff.

**Suggestion.** For a more comprehensive valuation of one or more items, it is useful to establish a folder of information on the items themselves and to gather as much background material as possible. Relevant sources include the object descriptions in the collection registration system, archival documentation relating to provenance and acquisition history, historical and art historical literature, exhibition and auction catalogues, restoration reports, data from material studies and information from the collection plan. Oral interviews with previous owners, manufacturers and current and former staff are another key source. Where necessary, you can supplement this information with a description of the item or collection based on a visual observation. Adding photos to the description (both overviews and close-ups of details) can be helpful. This folder should be linked to the object data in the collection registration system.

The valuation process comprises several steps that the team must go through to reach a useful outcome. For each step you can decide how detailed the information recorded on the worksheet needs to be, and what efforts you need to make to gather that information, depending on the reason, objective, time available and staff numbers. The instructions for completing the form describe and explain all six steps. Use the accompanying worksheet to go through them one by one and to record your results.

# Steps in the valuation process

## STEP 1:

**formulate the motive and the question behind the valuation and record them on the valuation form**

Carrying out a valuation is not an end in itself – there is always a prompt, a reason for doing so. This is usually because a decision or choice has to be made or because opportunities or threats have presented themselves.

Some motives for a valuation:

- a proposed acquisition
- to clean up all or part of a collection
- to finetune a collection profile
- to combine collections (e.g. following a merger)
- to draw up a collection plan
- to draw up a conservation plan
- to set up or reorganise a presentation or depot
- to promote collection mobility (reallocation and reassignment)
- to select a restoration method
- to mount a temporary exhibition

On the valuation form, specify as precisely as possible the motive for the valuation and the question being asked. Record this in the space provided at the top of the form.

The question will govern how you conduct the valuation. For example, it will determine the reference framework you choose (see step 2) and the criteria you apply (see step 3). The more precisely you word the motive and the parameters, the more useful the



### Stained glass windows from the State collection

The Cultural Heritage Agency manages a collection of twentieth-century stained glass windows by both notable Dutch designers and unknown makers. Some of these windows are on loan to museums. The Cultural Heritage Agency wishes to bring the remaining windows to the attention of architects, designers, real estate owners and others so that they can be reallocated and made more accessible. It is important to establish their value as the statement of significance will provide information to aid with finding suitable new locations. An understanding of the values assigned to the windows, and by whom, will assist the process of finding the right location.

*The whole seeks to represent the creation of things in glass, maker unknown, stained glass window, 81 x 138 cm, 1910-1919*

outcomes will be. Moreover, the reason behind the valuation will determine which actions you need to take to reach a useful outcome and what form you can best present this in.





Abraham Willet's  
collector's cabinet  
in the Museum  
Willet-Holthuysen

### Focusing on the Willets

The twentieth century saw far-reaching changes to the interior of an Amsterdam canal house that has been home to the Willet-Holthuysen Museum since 1896. Most changes were to the detriment of the Willet's fine late-nineteenth-century interior. Thanks in part to a valuation, the history of the inhabitants is once again the museum's central focus. The formal rooms on the first floor have been given top priority. And yet the first success is not here, but on the floor above, where there was a small, nondescript white-painted room that served as an exhibition space. It used to hold modern display cases filled with memorabilia from the Backers, an Amsterdam regent family. When these items were given on loan for an exhibition, the question arose of whether the room should be returned to its former state after the exhibition. The answer was no. The new emphasis on the Willets had made a return of the Backers impossible. Thus the restoration of Abraham Willet's former collection room was prompted by a temporary exhibition elsewhere. The room is once again the attractive mini-museum of the last master of the house.



### Illuminating Japanese prints

An exhibition of Japanese prints was what prompted Japan Museum SieboldHuis in Leiden to formulate a policy on light. SieboldHuis looks at the life and work of nineteenth-century physician Philipp Franz von Siebold, told through items which he himself collected in Japan and which form an official part of the collections of the National Museum of Ethnology, Naturalis Biodiversity Center and Leiden University Library. The staff first needed to establish what light dose would be acceptable for the especially light-sensitive Japanese prints. They then had to work out over what period of time they considered a loss of value to be acceptable. The outcomes, based on a valuation, were decisive. Some prints, which had been collected straight from the Japanese printers, had never been exposed to daylight or other light and therefore still retain their original colours. The information value of these examples is so high that the museum staff regard any fading as unacceptable. Exhibiting them is therefore out of the question. Prints that are in not such good condition are displayed in SieboldHuis with due caution. For these works the curators are prepared to accept a 'just noticeable' change involving 'a minimum loss of value over fifty years'.

*Ladies performing music*, Shunei, print in Japanmuseum SieboldHuis (from the collection of the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden), 145 x 32 cm, sine anno.

### How do you restore a Van Gogh?

The floor and walls in Van Gogh's painting *The Bedroom* have faded considerably over the years. To find answers to a host of restoration issues, an exploration was made of the artist's purpose and of the values that the painting represents. This revealed that the aspect of colour was hugely important – it was chiefly through colour that Van Gogh sought to convey his emotions to the viewer. Interdisciplinary research has uncovered which contrasting colours he originally used. After the varnish was removed, the painting was not brought back to its original colours because other values, such as material authenticity, have prevailed. Repainting was not an option since it is not permissible to simply paint over the original paint. Old damage has been carefully eliminated, however. And in the choice of varnish, consideration has been given to Van Gogh's ideas on the subject and to what kind of varnish is safe for the paint layer, given the painting's current state. Work is being done on digital reconstructions to give viewers a true impression of how the original colours would have looked.



*The Bedroom*, Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), oil on canvas, 72.4 x 91.3 cm, 1888 Arles. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Stichting)



Head of Museum Affairs at the Arnhem Museum

## Miriam Windhausen

‘We valued the historical collection of the Arnhem Museum because it is going to be incorporated in the new Arnhem Heritage Centre, which will also house the Gelderland library. We have a broad collection that is largely the result of donations and bequests from the Arnhem nobility. This includes fine objects of national significance, such as Delftware and Asian porcelain, eighteenth-century silver and paintings from the Hague School. Our new guiding principle for the valuation was simple – Arnhem. Which items will best tell the city’s story in the Heritage Centre? The earlier dividing line in our collection – between historical and contemporary items – became blurred. Sometimes we were able to make a decision quickly. The two seventeenth-century views of Arnhem by Jan van Goyen will of course make the move to the new premises. They are of national significance because they are the work of such an illustrious landscape painter. But they are also important in regional terms. Here you can clearly see the natural topography of the city, hemmed in between the high moraine and the Rhine. And in the view of the city from the southwest you can see ferries and larger boats. They had chiefly a local function, for goods distribution and transit. But sometimes the choice was more difficult, such as with Melchior d’Hondecoeter’s *Birds* painting from 1678. We still have to make a final decision on that. That work has nothing to do with Arnhem, but it came to us in a bequest from the Brantsens, a prominent Gelderland family. And one of the things we’d like to do in the Heritage Centre is tell the story of the region’s nobility and why they built up collections. In short, it’s important when carrying out a valuation to take your time and to make carefully considered decisions. And a curator takes a different view from a publicity officer or a collection manager. The most important thing is to share your experiences. The result can be highly illuminating. ’

Miriam Windhausen and the ‘View of Arnhem from the southwest’ (1643) by Jan van Goyen





## STEP 2:

**decide what you are going to value, what reference framework you will use and who the stakeholders are. use the reference framework form as a guide if necessary.**

There is no absolute yardstick for conducting a valuation. The value of an item or collection can only be judged in comparison with something else. That is why you always have to state what the item and collection is being compared with. In other words, what is your *reference framework*? Does an item have a high, medium or low value at the national, regional or local level, or within your own institution? What is the significance of an artwork in relation to the artist's complete oeuvre, or to other works from the same period, of the same style or from the same region? An item that is a highlight of your collection may have a more modest value at national level. The reverse could also be true – a national masterpiece may not fit the profile of your museum. By carefully wording the reason and question behind the valuation, you will arrive logically at an appropriate reference framework.

Stakeholders are people or groups who attach a special value to an item or collection, who have a current connection with it or a particular interest in it. For each item or collection, you may record on the reference framework form the people or groups who attach special value to or have a specific interest in it. This could be a group of volunteers who look after a particular part of a collection or friends of the museum who have helped fund an acquisition.

**The reference framework determines what an item or collection is compared with or what perspective it is viewed from. This could be at an international, national, regional or local level, at the level of the organisation itself or from the perspective of a particular group or community.**



### Survivors of the Iconoclasm

The 'Survivors of the Iconoclasm' exhibition in Museum Catharijneconvent featured exceptional Utrecht sculptures from the fifteenth century. Although many artworks were lost in the Iconoclasm, a number of them survived the purge. Ninety sculptural masterpieces from Utrecht were selected for this exhibition. It goes without saying that this selection was based on a regional reference framework – Utrecht and its environs. The fact that some of the statues are also masterpieces at a national level is a bonus, but not the primary perspective for the exhibition.

*Stone Head of a Woman, made by the Master of the Utrecht Stone Head of a Woman, first quarter 16th century*



### View of Schiedam belongs in Schiedam

Nico van Bakkum's 1936 watercolour *View of Schiedam* was added to the State collection in 1966 under the artists' subsidy scheme (BKR). In national terms it is of minor value, which is why the Cultural Heritage Agency decided to transfer the artwork to the Schiedam archive. There the townscape has a high regional historical value, which is one of the archive's collection criteria. The silhouettes of the mill and church tower of Schiedam are clearly visible on the skyline. The perspective used to make the valuation clearly showed that the watercolour was better suited to a collection with a regional character than a national one.

*View of Schiedam*,  
Nico van  
Bakkum (1936),  
water colour,  
37.7 x 54.5 cm,  
1966

The reference framework usually follows on logically from the motive and question behind the valuation. However, this is not always self-evident and more thought may be required. It is then helpful to compile an inventory of those who attach value to an item or collection, and from what perspective. The reference framework form can be a useful guide here.

You can use this form to map out the various perspectives alongside one another – what you are

valuing, what you are comparing it with and for whom it is significant. This is likely to generate new insights that will suggest an appropriate reference framework. On the form, record whether the item or collection scores a 'low', 'medium' or 'high' within your chosen framework, and for whom. You should also record the reasons why you chose that particular reference framework. This will make it possible at a later date to identify why the valuation was conducted in this way.

Director of the Zoetermeer City Museum

## Jouetta van der Ploeg

‘Our museum, which started out as a historical society, had been collecting everything under the sun since 1949. Anything connected with Zoetermeer and its environs – cobblers’ tools, drawings of the old village, TV sets, toys, blankets, linen bags, sugar packets and sporting logos of Zoetermeer companies. It was a mixed assortment, not based on any kind of selection policy. Eventually, both the museum and depot were at bursting point. It was high time to tidy up the collection, which meant first having to value it. But what reference framework should we use? A national viewpoint – that of the Netherlands Collection – wasn’t appropriate, as that didn’t fit the aim of our museum. We looked at what was important for Zoetermeer itself. And then we introduced our own hierarchy: a top collection, a core collection, a storage collection, and a collection to be discarded. That already cut things down considerably, eliminating objects in poor condition, pennants belonging to local sports clubs, duplicated items. When in doubt, the curator and I called in various experts on Zoetermeer history. They sometimes had better arguments for keeping an item than we did, or they had important information about the donors. All in all, four thousand items passed through our hands in this way. We spent an entire summer in the depot. The collection became more and more manageable and we were able to think about the direction we wanted the museum to take. For the first time, we drew up a clear mission statement and divided our collection policy into two themes. These are Village and Town, because of Zoetermeer’s status as a centre of urban expansion, and Mass culture and Interiors, because we want to present a picture of postwar Zoetermeer. Our exhibitions are also based on this classification. Thanks to the valuation and to our chosen reference framework, the museum now has a more robust profile. If I had an opportunity to do it all over again, I’d compare our collection with those in the surrounding region to see where there is duplication, especially in our local history subcollection. ’

*Jouetta van der Ploeg in an office with a cash register and time clock from the early twentieth century, donated by a former Zoetermeer businessman*









A view of the  
'The Presentation',  
an exhibition put together  
by Queen Beatrix in  
the Stedelijk Museum.  
Photo Stedelijk Museum  
Amsterdam

### Beatrix's choice

If you had to put together a 'national top 100' of postwar Dutch art, it is obvious what the reference framework would be – a national one. But in 2000 when the Stedelijk Museum (a museum of modern and contemporary art and design) invited Queen Beatrix, as guest curator, to mount an exhibition of her favourite pieces of Dutch art after 1945, the reference framework was above all a personal one.

## STEP 3:

### decide the relevant criteria for the valuation and define the valuation framework – record them on the valuation form

‘Valuing’ refers to the process of spelling out the values assigned to an item or collection by testing them against previously established and defined criteria. Before embarking on a valuation, you have to decide on the valuation criteria that are relevant to finding answers to the question you have asked. This publication and the associated valuation form categorise the most commonly used criteria into features and three main groups namely *culture historical*, *social* and *use*. Although these last three groups are in principle of equal value, an item or collection must satisfy one or more ‘culture historical’ criteria to be considered part of cultural heritage.

If necessary, the valuation team can rank these groups or the criteria within a group. Any such hierarchy will depend on the museum’s mission and objectives or on the question asked in the valuation. For a museum whose primary focus is entertainment rather than knowledge transfer, a collection’s perception value will probably carry greater weight than its culture historical values. A museum of art, on the other hand, will no doubt attach greater importance to artistic value than to information value. Two frames of reference were chosen for valuing the collection of the Arnhem Museum. The first was the regional or provincial level – what significance does the collection have for the Arnhem region and the province of Gelderland? The second was from the perspective of the Heritage Centre, which the Arnhem Museum has been part of since 2013 – what value does the collection represent in relation to the new Heritage Centre?

**Suggestion.** If you have problems deciding beforehand which criteria are relevant for you, you can start with the full set of criteria on the valuation form. As you work your way through them, you will soon discover which ones you can skip or which ones you would like to add. But don’t be too quick to add your own criteria. You may discover as you go that an item or collection can be assigned values that were not obvious at first glance.

Use the motive and question behind the valuation to decide which criteria you will base your assessment on. The valuation form sets out the most common criteria and groups them logically. There is space at the bottom of the form for you to add any additional criteria that apply specifically to your collection or institution. If you do add your own criteria, state clearly what you mean by them.

**Suggestion.** When working on the valuation as a team, it is useful to have a large version of the form to refer to. During discussions this will allow everyone to see at a glance what the valuation criteria are and which main groupings they fall under.

**Suggestion.** You could also include the valuation criteria on your institution’s acquisition form. Go over the list of criteria for each proposed acquisition. This will enable you to test each acquisition in terms of its significance for the collection.



Cooking stove, with components from Vulcaansoord, Terborg,  
sheet iron outer casing, cast iron ornamentation, 1880-1900

### The story behind the stove

The Netherlands Open Air Museum (NOM) in Arnhem was offered a set of stoves by the Netherlands Stove Museum in Alkmaar, which was closing its doors. Because NOM already had its own collection of stoves, this called for a valuation of part of its collection. The outcome then placed the museum in a better position to decide which of its own stoves should be reallocated and which Alkmaar stoves might be added to the NOM collection. In the valuation, the NOM ranked the various criteria in terms of importance. At the top of the list came ensemble value, provenance value and economic value. Historical and artistic value were ranked as being of medium importance and information value as least important. The museum attaches considerable value to traces of use and repair, especially as its collection policy is geared towards everyday items that show clear signs of wear and tear. These can tell us something about everyday life in the past and about the story behind the object.

The valuation method outlined in this publication does not prescribe a particular valuation framework, as this will depend on the motive for the valuation, the question being asked, what is being valued and the reference framework – all of which differ in each case. It is you who must decide on the valuation framework, the ‘yardstick’ by which to assess your collection. To do so, you first need to outline in general terms (in the ‘low’, ‘medium’ and ‘high’ columns) which criteria an item or collection must satisfy to be assigned each of these labels. In other words, you decide what ‘low’, ‘medium’ and ‘high’ mean for you. This should be done for each chosen criterion.

Defining the valuation framework is vital in order for your organisation to develop a common approach to the allocation of scores. This is particularly important if different people are conducting the valuation, either as a team or independently of one another. But even if only one person is involved it makes sense to establish valuation parameters for the future. This will also make it possible at a later date to identify how you arrived at particular scores.



## STEP 4:

### assign value scores and support them with arguments – record this on the valuation form

The valuation form can be used in various ways. By filling out the form in its entirety, copying the text from the 'Argumentation' sections and arranging them in successive order, you will have a complete statement of significance. This statement is then a useful tool for communicating the significance of a collection, for explaining why an item would make a useful supplement to your collection or why you are applying for an acquisition or restoration grant. If, on the other hand, your aim is to set priorities for collection care, it is useful to have a general overview of the collection at the level of the various subcollections. Here, an indication of value in terms of 'low', 'medium' and 'high' is often enough to provide an overview of how value is spread across the collection.

It is problematic to attempt to fully quantify cultural value and then express it in terms of a single number. Some institutions do so by assigning weighting factors to the individual criteria and then adding up the weighted scores. This tends to give a distorted picture because weighting factors can differ for each item. For example, a badly burnt book with a high information value can be no less of a highlight than a painting in perfect condition with a high artistic value.

Record on the valuation form whether and to what extent the item or collection satisfies your chosen criteria and why. Additional questions have been added for each criterion on the form. A fuller explanation of the different criteria follows below.

**Suggestion.** You will often have some idea beforehand about whether an item or collection has a higher or lower than average value. If this is the case, you can assign a score for each chosen criterion and back it up with arguments. If you have not yet worked out your judgement in advance, you can start by answering the additional questions. You can then describe how the item or collection meets the criteria and assign a score.

**Suggestion.** The arguments accompanying the valuation are often more important than the score you give. Valuations are a snapshot: they are subject to change, dependent on the knowledge and background of the people conducting them, on the chosen reference framework, and on a moment in time. It is therefore important to record your arguments so that you and your successors can later find out how you arrived at a particular judgement.

#### Features

Once you have formulated the motive and the question behind the valuation, have decided on the scope, the reference framework and the stakeholders, and have selected and defined the criteria, the actual valuation can begin. You need to record the information you have about the items or collection in terms of four *features* – condition, ensemble value, provenance and rarity/representativeness. The information in the collection registration system is often a useful place to start. Is the item in a stable condition, is it suitable for use? Is it made up of parts that form a whole? Are there different items that have a strong association with one another? Is the provenance documented? Is the item or collection unique of its kind?

Of themselves, the outcomes say nothing about the value, although they may affect an item's valuation. You need the outcomes to determine the culture historical, social and use values of the item or collection. If the provenance is completely unknown, for example, it is often hard to establish the historical or artistic value.

The four features can strengthen or weaken the substantive values. A provenanced item is usually assigned a higher information value than an equivalent unprovenanced item, and an item with a high historical value and in excellent condition will be valued more highly than an equivalent item in poor condition.



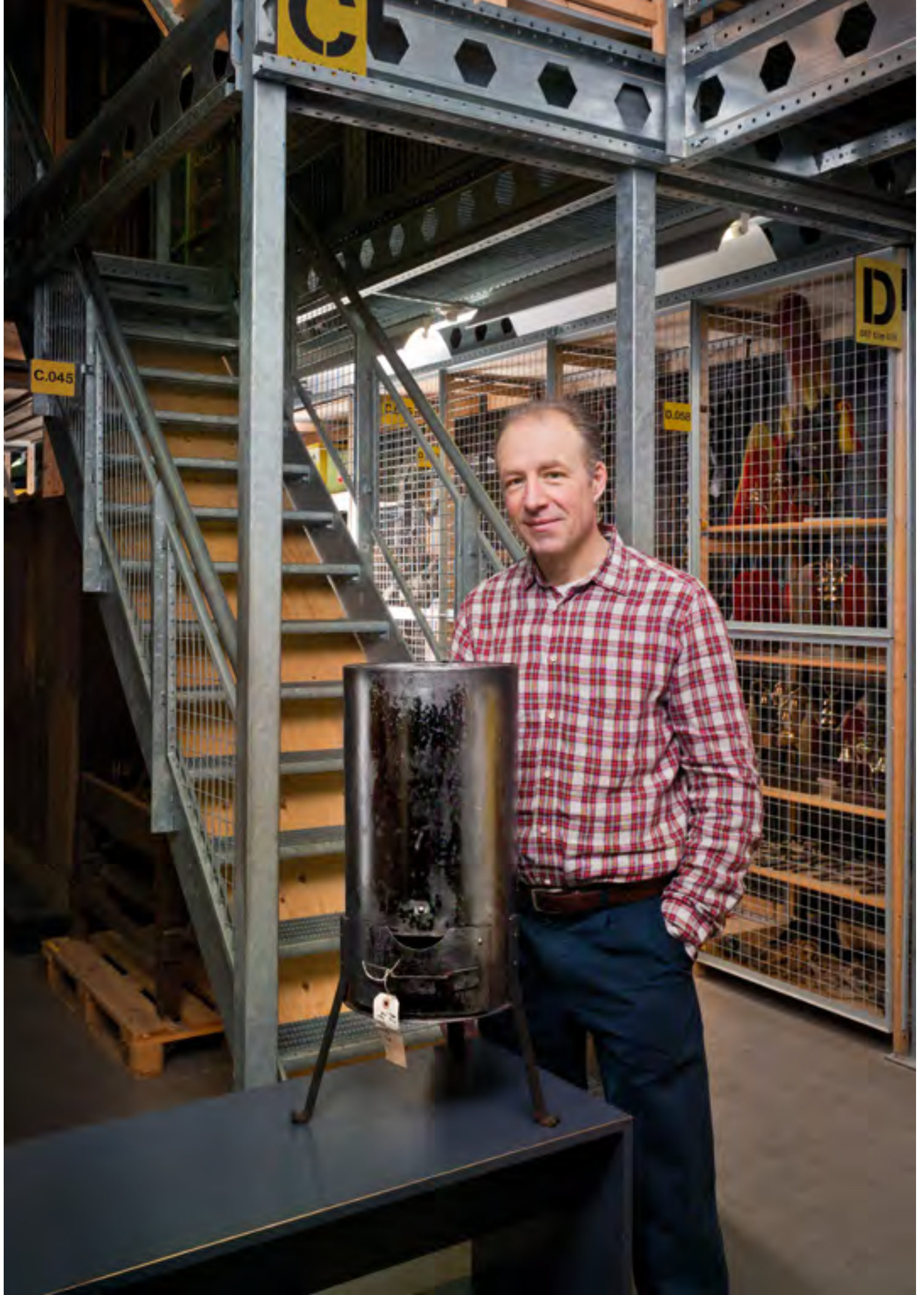
Curator of domestic culture at the Netherlands  
Open Air Museum in Arnhem

## Hans Piena

‘As well as examining the ensemble, artistic or presentation value of items in the valuation, we also took a good look at signs of reuse, repairs and traces of use. These aspects are central to the collection because our museum is concerned with everyday life. So most of our objects have been used, such as items of clothing that were handed down from mother to daughter. There’s a lot you can learn from them – they’ve often been altered over the years and adapted to the latest fashion. The same applies to furniture, which was endlessly repaired and reused in order to save money. For some types, such as a particular eighteenth-century commode, there are no surviving examples. It’s obvious that some of our stoves were repaired professionally while others were patched up by the owners themselves, using a piece of tin secured with wire to cover a crack – nice details that really bring an item to life. But stoves have even more to say. They can tell us about the period in the late nineteenth century when separate kitchens became fashionable. Before that, many people lived in one room around a single stove. That’s where they boiled the baby’s nappies, heated food for the animals, boiled water for cleaning milk cans, and prepared food. When visitors see these signs of use, they find it easier to visualise that situation. This is what increases the value of the item. Or take our World War Two emergency stove. When coal ran out during the Hongerwinter, the Dutch famine of 1944, and it was freezing cold, the Germans ordered the city’s gas supply to be turned off. All companies that were able to work metal then made make-shift stoves. Everything went into these stoves – the hatch to the attic, books and finally even the bookshelves. Half the Dutch population used these stoves in their struggle to survive. When I see this one, it brings a lump to my throat – those times were harder than I can possibly imagine.’

*Hans Piena and an emergency  
stove from World War Two*







### Residues in pharmacy jars

Some items should not be cleaned because old traces of use need to be carefully preserved. These tell us something about an item's use, composition or history, and about its contents. One such example are the pharmacy jars in the collection of Museum Boerhaave whose chemical contents are unknown and whose labels are now illegible. Research into the composition of the medicine residues can produce both definite answers and added value. The same applies to the contents of funerary urns or the residues in antique Egyptian cosmetic flasks at the Dutch National Museum of Antiquities.

Pharmacy jar with inscription  
'OL io Di APPARIT io',  
Italian earthenware, 1550-1650

On the other hand, the very fact that an item looks old and worn may enhance its perception value. Experience has shown that a valuation team will constantly switch back and forth between the features and substantive values in this step of the process. This enables them to adjust their thinking and finetune their conclusions, and eventually, to arrive at a well-considered final judgement. Because a valuation is not a static entity but can change over time, the result could be different in five years' time. Moreover, a different question may arise, leading to a different outcome.

#### (1) Condition

- Is the item or collection in good condition compared with comparable items or collections?
- Is the item or collection in good condition for the function that it fulfils – is it suitable for use?
- Is the item or collection intact or complete? What parts are missing?
- Is the item or collection in its original condition? If not, what changes have been made?
- Does the collection show traces of use?





Raku bowl,  
maker unknown, stoneware,  
ca. 1650 - ca. 1750

### Restoration can sometimes enhance value

Although cracks or visible restorations usually reduce an object's value, the opposite is the case for a certain type of raku bowl in Japan, where restorations in fact boost value. These bowls do not need to have a smooth polish as it is their imperfections that lend added depth. The bowl in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum collection reflects the 'hidden beauty' beneath the surface. It is an anonymous seveneenth-century imitation of the sixteenth-century Japanese raku bowls that were used in tea ceremonies. This type of bowl is valued for its special form, which lets you cup the tea in your hands, as it were. Simply turn the bowl in your hands until it falls naturally into place. The provenance of these bowls is of particular importance to the Japanese, and bowls that once belonged to famous tea masters are especially prized.

Collections and components that are in good condition tend to be valued more highly than ones that are not. A collection with exceptional integrity (undamaged, little or no wear, little or no discolouration) or one that is still mainly made up of its original materials may contain information that has not been preserved (or is barely preserved) elsewhere. On the other hand, past traces of wear and use may sometimes enhance culture historical values, such as historical value and information value.

#### *Related terms:*

*state, intactness, material authenticity, material integrity*



*The company of Captain Frans Banninck Cocq and Lieutenant Willem van Ruytenburch, known as The Nightwatch, Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn, oil, 4.37 x 3.63 m, 1642*

### Condition of the Nightwatch

Rembrandt van Rijn's celebrated *Nightwatch* has had much to contend with over the years. The masterpiece that hangs in the Rijksmuseum today is not in its original form. Painted between 1639 and 1642, it was originally some 5 by 3.87 metres. Later, in 1715, the regents ordered large strips to be cut away so that the canvas would fit on the wall of the Royal Palace in Amsterdam. The painting now measures 4.37 by 3.63 metres. A replica and a watercolour were made of the painting and, although much smaller than the original, they give a good idea of the missing sections. Later, the painting incurred further damage. In 1975 a visitor attacked it with a knife and in 1990 someone else threw hydrochloric acid over it. In both cases the painting could be restored. These incidents have in no way detracted from the value placed on this militia painting. *The Nightwatch* represents numerous values, including historical, artistic, museum, economic and perception values. Moreover, the painting continues to enjoy a current value as an icon of national identity, even though it has suffered much as an object.

**(2) Ensemble value**

- Does it involve an ensemble?
- What is the link (relationship between items, relationship of the subcollection to other subcollections, relationship between items and documentation, relationship between the collection, buildings and setting)? Also bear in mind the relationship between tangible and intangible aspects such as sound and smell.
- Is the original ensemble intact or has the link between particular components been broken?

**Related terms:**

*intactness, unity, cohesion, conceptual integrity, conceptual authenticity, contextual authenticity*

**Sint Hubertus hunting lodge has everything**

The Sint Hubertus hunting lodge represents one of the most exceptional ensemble values in the Netherlands. The Kröller-Müllers, an art-collecting couple, commissioned architect H.P. Berlage (1856-1934) to design the building, its interior, furniture and annexes, the garden with its pathways and pond, as well as the surroundings. The result was a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a unified whole. A number of artists worked on the building alongside Berlage. Besides the cohesion between these various elements, there is also a link with the Hoge Veluwe National Park and the art collection housed in the Kröller-Müller Museum. The Sint Hubertus hunting lodge has a high ensemble value because everything is so precisely coordinated, has been kept together and still functions in its original setting. It also has a high artistic value because it exemplifies the development of Dutch style in the early twentieth century.

Sint Hubertus Hunting Lodge, H.P. Berlage, designed in 1914. The Hoge Veluwe National Park Foundation

Jacoba Lampsins' salon  
with three of the five wall-  
size paintings by Ferdinand  
Bol, total ensemble surface  
area approx. 75 m<sup>2</sup>, 1660-  
1663. Digital reconstruction  
Jonathan Gratton

### The mystery of the salon paintings

Did they belong together or not – the four paintings by Ferdinand Bol (1616-1680) in the Peace Palace in The Hague and a fifth canvas in the North Brabant Museum? At first glance the stories they depict – armour-clad Aeneas, Moses in his bulrush basket and King Cyrus returning the temple treasures to the Israelites – seem to bear little relationship to one another. But nothing could be further from the truth. These paintings once hung alongside one another in the salon of a house on the Nieuwegracht in Utrecht, as revealed by an investigation carried out by the Cultural Heritage Agency in collaboration with the University of Amsterdam (and funded by NWO, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research). When Bol's paintings were restored, the nail holes, varnish remains and the way the paint layers were built up were examined in detail. So too were the history and construction history of the house, along with various archival documents. It was discovered that in the mid-seventeenth century widow Jacoba Lampsins commissioned Ferdinand Bol to paint canvases to cover the walls of her salon. The stories that he painted all relate to her wish that her three sons might occupy high positions in society, as well as to the battle within the Utrecht city council about the management of property belonging to the Catholic Church. Like so many ensemble works, they have become separated, resulting in what is known as 'orphan works'. By unravelling the mystery surrounding these Ferdinand Bol canvases, we now know that they once belonged together.



### (3) Provenance

- Is the provenance of the item or collection known and documented?
- Who made/designed the item or collection?
- Who commissioned the making of the item or collection?
- Who has owned the item or collection?
- How was the item or collection used in the past, and by whom?
- What is known about the acquisition (purchase, gift, bequest, loan)?
- How reliable is the provenance information?
- How does knowledge about the provenance of the item or collection add to its significance?



**Suggestion.** Items and collections with a well-documented provenance are likely to be valued more highly than those which are less well-documented or not at all. Valuation is more difficult if little is known about the provenance. In such cases it is advisable to try to find out more about the provenance history before embarking on a valuation.

**Related terms:**

*documentation, life story, biography, source, origin, pedigree*

**(4) Rarity and representativeness**

- Is the item or collection unique of its kind?
- Are there (many or few) comparable items or collections?
- Are there exceptional features that distinguish the item or collection from others? For example, is it especially well documented?
- Is it an exceptional or special example of a certain type of item or collection?
- Is it highly representative of a particular period, place, style, movement, practice, theme, community?

The combination of certain authentic elements in an item or collection can increase its rarity value.



**Reunited at last**

The portrait of Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and its zinc frame have been reunited after more than a century. In 1907 Hague painter Sophie Hirschmann donated her portrait of the Tsar to mark the Second Hague Peace Conference, held in the Ridderzaal. The painting was supposed to hang in the Peace Palace, which was still under construction, but this did not happen because its zinc frame was too heavy. And in the meantime Tsar Nicholas II had donated another portrait of himself. Hirschmann's painting, without its frame, became part of the State collection in 1954. In 2010 a conservator at the Cultural Heritage Agency learned by accident that the painting must once have sported a magnificent frame. He felt that if the frame was still around, it had to be somewhere in the vicinity of the Ridderzaal. And indeed, that's where it was discovered – in the Ridderzaal attic. Since then, frame and painting have been reunited, thus restoring the original ensemble. The ensemble value has been enhanced, which in turn has boosted the historical value of both painting and frame. The zinc frame is also special because of the material from which it is made, which is unique for a frame.

Painter Sophie Hirschmann posing with her portrait of Tsar Nicholas II in a zinc frame, 1907.

Veenhuijzen Collection, Central Bureau for Genealogy, The Hague





Visitors viewing the  
*Panorama Mesdag*,  
Hendrik Willem  
Mesdag, oil paint,  
14 x 120 m, 1881

### Panorama Mesdag

The *Panorama Mesdag* (1881) in The Hague offers a unique view of the North Sea, the dunes, The Hague and Scheveningen. Measuring no less than 120 metres in circumference and 14 metres in height, the Netherlands biggest painting is considered the most important work in Hendrik Willem Mesdag's oeuvre. The impressive canvases, arranged to form a cylindrical work, create a special experience and illusion for the viewer standing in the centre. Panorama paintings were very popular in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but only a handful have been preserved. The *Panorama Mesdag* is the world's oldest surviving panorama in its original location and is therefore a rare culture historical monument. It is listed as one of the top 100 UNESCO monuments in the Netherlands.

If an item or collection scores highly on one or more features, this can increase or reduce its culture historical values. The fact that an item is very old or rare usually enhances its historical value, as does a known provenance. But this alone does not automatically mean that it can be assigned a culture historical value, or that it is a heritage object.

#### Related terms:

*uniqueness, exemplar value, prototype, type exemplar*

### Culture historical values

To be labelled as cultural heritage – in other words worth preserving – an item or collection must satisfy one or more culture historical criteria. We have identified three criteria: historical value, artistic value and information value. The *features* (condition, ensemble value, provenance and rarity/representativeness) can increase or decrease the values assigned on the basis of the substantive criteria. They also make it easier to compare items and collections with one another.



Detail of the walking cane with Johan van Oldenbarnevelt's initials, Museum Flehite, Amersfoort. Photo Ep de Ruiter



Johan van Oldenbarnevelt's walking cane, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, maker unknown, wood, ivory and iron, 96 cm, 1600-1625

### Johan van Oldenbarnevelt's cane

Not all walking canes have value but the one that belonged to Dutch statesman Johan van Oldenbarnevelt certainly does. That cane is imbued with historical significance because Van Oldenbarnevelt used it to mount the scaffold shortly before he was beheaded. The poet Vondel even wrote a poem about it. The cane thus acquired a relic-like status. A number of museums, such as Museum Flehite in Amersfoort and the Rijksmuseum, also claim to hold the original. The latter even has two of them (one of which is on loan from the Amsterdam University Library). So which is the one true walking cane belonging to Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the one he used to climb the scaffold in 1619? We will never know. The significance of all these canes lies not so much in the material objects themselves, with their contested authenticity, but in the historical events to which they refer.

#### (1) Historical value

- Is the item or collection associated with an important historical person, group, community, place, event or activity?
- Does the item or collection reflect an important historical period, process, theme, development, zeitgeist or way of life?

- Does the item or collection help us to understand a period, place, activity, industry, group, community, person or event, and if so, how?

#### *Related terms:*

*biographical value, social history value, natural history value, scientific history value, technological history value*

General director of the Rotterdam Museum. He has held the special 'History of Rotterdam' chair at Erasmus University Rotterdam since 1997.

## Paul van de Laar

‘**T**he object with catalogue number 21063, better known as the white flag of surrender of Rotterdam, has an enormous historical value. Not that you can tell from its appearance – it’s simply a white bedsheet attached to a broomstick. But this was the flag held by sergeant-major Gerrit van Ommering at four o’clock on 14 May 1940, when Rotterdam surrendered to the Germans following the catastrophic bombing of the city. He carried it across the old Willemsbrug bridge towards the German troops on the other side of the Meuse river. You can also see it in old film footage. The Rotterdam Museum acquired the flag in 1980. Before that the Van Ommering family had kept it rolled up and stored in the meter cupboard. Van Ommering’s widow asked us to come and collect it. We were delighted because it obviously represents a highlight for our museum. The flag is also of great interest to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, for their national history department. But we’re the ones who have it! And we’ll leave the bloodstains as they are. Because when Van Ommering walked through Rotterdam with that flag, he stopped and used a torn-off strip to bandage up a wounded Dutch marine. That’s how the blood spatters got there. And they of course increase the flag’s perception value. Since we’ve had it here in the museum, there’s been all manner of speculation about its authenticity. Some people who have looked at old film footage claim that the flagpole is square, whereas the one on our flag is round. Others are convinced that this is a sheet from the Vroom & Dreesmann department store, and not one that was just grabbed from a nearby house. More than one white flag was used in Rotterdam that day, but we have no doubts about this one – it’s the real flag of surrender. The fact that this discussion flares up from time to time shows you just how special this flag is.’





**(2) Artistic value**

- Does the item or collection have a special design, style or execution?
- Does the item or collection demonstrate special artistry, creativity or originality of idea, form or function?
- Is the item or collection a good example of a particular style, design, artistic movement or of the work of a particular artist, designer or architect?
- Is the item or collection original or innovative in its design?
- Does the item or collection show a high degree of creativity, workmanship or technical accomplishment in its execution?

**Related terms:**

*art historical value, architectural history value, design value, workmanship, decorative value*

**(3) Information value**

- Is the item kept because of the information that can be 'read' from it, such as archival documents, books and natural history specimens?
- Is the item or collection of interest for science, scholarship or research now or in the future?
- Does the item or collection contain specific elements or components that are of interest for science, scholarship or research?
- Does the item constitute a vital piece of evidence for a particular process, theory or discovery?

**Related terms:**

*scientific value, research value, documentation value, reference value, archival value*



*Study for Counter-composition XVI, Theo van Doesburg, pencil, gouache, paper, 5 x 9 cm, 1924*

### Van Doesburg versus Mondrian

Theo van Doesburg's *Counter-compositions* represent a special artistic value. They are key works both in terms of Van Doesburg's oeuvre and in Dutch art history. The paintings with diagonals were a rebellious response to the work of Mondrian, who worked only with horizontal and vertical lines during this period. Van Doesburg exerted a major influence on the art movement De Stijl and in about 1923 he developed in a new direction, inspired by the architects with whom he collaborated. His compositions, which he called 'counter-compositions', acquired an element of movement through the use of diagonals. It led to a radical break with Mondrian, who resigned from De Stijl shortly afterwards.



*The Peanut Butter Floor*, Wim T. Schippers, first executed in 1962, purchased by the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam in 2010. Photo Lotte Stekelenburg

### Peanut butter with humour

The artistic value of *The Peanut Butter Floor* by Wim T. Schippers has not gone unchallenged. Museum Boijmans van Beuningen's purchase of the artwork in 2010 sparked a minor commotion, with both the acquisition and the artist attracting a good deal of media attention. Opinions about the artwork's value were strongly divided. Director Sjarel Ex called it the most important purchase of the year. The artist Wim T. Schippers works in many fields, as a maker of radio and television programmes, a writer and a visual artist. His work is associated with the Fluxus movement, with pop art and conceptual art.

Humour and absurdity are a central aspect of his work. He likes to create confusion and to play with traditional ideas about art. *The Peanut Butter Floor* is a conceptual artwork that was first executed by the artist in 1962. The uproar that arose in 2010 did precisely what Schippers had been doing for forty years – getting people to think about what art actually is. Schippers also likes to show the light-hearted side of art. Viewed in these terms, *The Peanut Butter Floor* has lost none of its artistic value forty years after its debut.



*Untitled*, design for sgraffito, Jeroen Voskuyl, gouache, pencil and paper, 84.5 x 73 cm, 1954

### Voskuyl's design sketches

The design sketches and drawings for artist Jeroen Voskuyl's sgraffito for the Geodesy Faculty building in Wageningen – designed by architect F. Röntgen in 1953 and now a listed building – are a useful source of information.

The artist's heirs donated the sketches and drawings to the Dutch State. Voskuyl died at a young age and little is known about his monumental work. The same applies to much of the monumental art from the Dutch period of reconstruction following the Second World War. By studying Voskuyl's design drawings and sketches, we can gain an understanding of various levels of the design process – not just how this specific sgraffito was created, but also the studio practices of this monumental artist. The sketches and drawings may even shed light on the studio practices of Reconstruction-period monumental artists in general, especially as there are few other sources available.



### Social and societal values

*Social and societal values* are attributed on the basis of the current significance that an item or collection has for a particular group or community. They differ from ‘cultural history values’ in that they relate to the current (and not historical) meaning of items and collections. Social and societal values are tested against two criteria: *social* and *perception values*. ‘Social’ relates to the collective perception of a community group with a current attachment to a particular item or collection (e.g. an Orange association might have a special link with a Dutch royal collection or a particular faith community with its own religious heritage). ‘Perception’ relates



The attic church in Our Lord in the Attic Museum, restored in nineteenth-century style.  
Photo Co de Kruijff

#### Roman Catholic Amsterdam

The interior of Our Lord in the Attic Museum in Amsterdam has a community value because this Roman Catholic Church in the attic continues to fulfil a religious function for the Catholics of Amsterdam. Our Lord in the Attic is open to the public and is used for Masses, weddings and organ recitals. It therefore represents another social value – perception value.

to something that is experienced individually, but which acquires a collective character when shared by a large group.

#### (1) Social value

- Does the item or collection fulfil a current function for a particular community or group, and if so, how?
- Is the item or collection of special social, spiritual, religious, community or political significance for a particular community or group, and if so, why?
- Are there particular ideas, customs, traditions or practices associated with the item or collection for certain groups?
- Are there particular stakeholders who might step into action if ‘their heritage’ is at issue?

**Suggestion.** To determine social value, refer to the information that you have recorded on the reference framework form.

Once an object or collection ceases to have community significance for a particular group or community (in other words, it is no longer relevant), it has no social and societal value. It may, however, have a social history value or historical value (see historical value).

#### Related terms:

*social value, community value, spiritual value, religious value, symbolic value, identity value*

#### (2) Perception value

- Does the item or collection evoke a powerful sensory sensation (smell, sound, taste, touch, sight) in the viewer?
- Does the item or collection emanate a particular atmosphere? Does it evoke a particular memory, recognition or emotion? Does it radiate great age, or newness?
- Do many people regard the item or collection as particularly beautiful or ugly?

'Palazzo di Pietro', Pim Fortuyn's house in Rotterdam, Rotterdam City Archives Collection, Pim 362



### Legacy or heritage?

The murder of politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002 sent a shock wave through Dutch society. Many described it as the first political murder since that of the De Witt brothers in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It came as an added blow for his faithful supporters and followers, who saw him as someone who had given the people a voice. It was not just Fortuyn's political message that captured the popular imagination, but also his personality. After his death the question arose as to what should happen to his estate – his house and its contents, his archives and painting collection. These were viewed and valued from different perspectives by various professional organisations. The Rotterdam City Archives were interested in Fortuyn's papers that related to his role in local politics. The Rotterdam Museum acquired objects that characterised Fortuyn as both a local politician and an individual. But what was to be done with Fortuyn's home, whose decor reflected his dandyish lifestyle, and his personal effects? Fortuyn's admirers made attempts to turn his Rotterdam house, the 'Palazzo di Pietro', into a museum. But funding for this venture failed to get off the ground. Thus it was the stakeholders for whom Fortuyn's estate represented the greatest social and societal value who ultimately lost out. What remained of the house contents was auctioned off and became dispersed.

An item or collection's perception values relate to the degree to which it evokes sensations, emotions and associations. This can be caused by both tangible and intangible aspects. Perception involves an individual experience, which acquires a collective character if shared by a large group of people.

#### **Related terms:**

*emotional value, sensory value, aesthetic value, associative value*



*Skull of a skeleton with burning cigarette*, Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890), oil on canvas, 32.3 x 24.8 cm, 1886 Antwerp. Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam (Vincent van Gogh Stichting)

### Studio humour

The public's appreciation of artworks doesn't always match that of art historians. *Skull of a skeleton with burning cigarette*, painted by Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) in 1886, is an example of 'studio humour', intended as an ironic comment on the traditional teaching methods of the academy. The work had been on permanent display in the Van Gogh Museum for a long time but it was taken down when staff decided that it wasn't significant enough to be on permanent display. The public soon made its disappointment felt, which prompted the Museum to reinstate the much-loved artwork.





Plaster cast of the *Venus of Arles*, National Museum of Antiquities, Leiden, 18th century; copy of a Roman statue in marble, Louvre, Paris, 1st century AD. Photo Rijksmuseum van Oudheden

### The value of plaster

There has been considerable change in the *culture historical* valuation of plaster casts made of sculptures since Classical Antiquity. Although many still regarded them as important in the early twentieth century, appreciation for this type of object began to decline from the 1920s onwards. The past two decades have seen a revival of interest, however, and they feature once again in various exhibitions.

The *educational* value of the plaster casts lies in their role within art education. They are also of interest because of their history of use. This means that the pencil marks added to casts over the years during drawing lessons are not allowed to be removed during conservation. They are viewed as traces of use and should therefore be preserved. Some casts also have *information value* because they reveal elements that have been lost from the original sculpture.

The plaster casts and copies gave rise to an *artistic* appreciation of the original statues in Europe. They were a means by which many people could bring classical culture into their homes and admire it.

*Curator of the Classical World collection at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden (RMO). He is also Extraordinary Professor in the field of Museum Archaeology at Leiden University.*

## Ruurd Halbertsma

‘Plaster casts of famous statues from Antiquity were popular for a very long time. Louis XIV, for instance, had copies made of the reliefs on Trajan’s column in Rome. This was a way of demonstrating that he was on friendly terms with the Pope, that he had connections in high places. Archaeologists are still delighted with these copies because the reliefs have since been severely eroded by air pollution and acid rain – some faces are unrecognisable and the trumpets worn away. But you can still easily make them out on the casts. And for years they were used by art academies for teaching purposes. They were ideal for studying the muscular system – after all, not every young artist could afford to make a Grand Tour and view the originals. But in the final decades of the twentieth century many of the plaster casts were consigned to the junk heap. It was no longer fashionable to draw from them. Now the situation has changed again. We had an exhibition on plaster casts not so long ago. They were restored in front of the public, attracting many visitors. And drawing lessons have also made a comeback in our museum. I personally think the copy of Laocoön and His Sons is very special. Michelangelo was present when it was discovered in the sixteenth century, and he restored the missing arm. But unfortunately, he did it incorrectly. The arm was later found and put back in its original position, bent backwards. The cast shows Michelangelo’s reconstruction. It therefore tells the story of the rediscovery, of how restorations were done at that time and of the changing values in sculpture – statues had to be whole then, not in pieces – and it tells us about the archaeologists who went in search of the missing arm. All in all, a fine illustration of the life of this statue.’





### On Mondrian's technique

*Victory Boogie Woogie* represents not only a high artistic value but also a high information value. Purchased by the Dutch state in 1998, the painting has hung since then in the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, a museum of modern art and design in the Hague, where it is the jewel in the crown of the Mondrian collection. A major study was launched in 2006 into the painting's genesis and condition. Some of this work was carried out under the public eye by the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag and the Cultural Heritage Agency. They traced the complete restoration history, examined historical sources and identified most of the materials used. The study also yielded remarkable findings about how Mondrian went about his work in the last years of his life. This knowledge is indispensable for the Mondrian Restoration Project, which the Gemeentemuseum will continue to work on in the years ahead. The published results of the research into *Victory Boogie Woogie* enable both the public and professionals to learn about all aspects of this international masterpiece.



Examining the *Victory Boogie Woogie*, Piet Mondrian, oil, paper, and adhesive tape on canvas, 127 x 127 cm, 1942-1944. On loan to the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag



### Verkade pavilion boosts visitor numbers

Until a few years ago, the Foundation for the Preservation of Verkade's Cultural Heritage managed an extensive and varied collection on the history of Verkade, a family company headquartered in Zaandam. The Foundation's board, who felt that the Verkade legacy should be made accessible to the general public, strongly advocated a museum presentation. In 2009 the Zaans Museum took over the collection and built a separate pavilion for it. This was a fascinating supplement to the museum's collection, as the Verkade story fitted perfectly within the context of the Zaanstreek as a major industrial area. The Verkade pavilion, complete with a full chocolate-production line, proved a huge drawcard. As well as a high perception value, the Verkade collection has a high economic value. Since the addition of the Verkade pavilion, the number of visitors has jumped from 23,000 to 60,000 per year.



The Verkade Pavilion at the Zaans Museum attracts large numbers of visitors

### Use values

*Use values* relate to the function and actual use of items and collections, from both a museum and an economic perspective. Use values should not be confused with potential use or usefulness, an aspect that forms part of development potential. (See the comment below on the difference between use values and usefulness.) Use values are tested against *museum* and *economic criteria*.

#### (1) Museum

- How often is the item used for presentation, education, research and reference purposes?
- Is it a highlight of the permanent presentation?  
A public favourite?
- How often does it appear in popular or academic publications?
- How important is it for the organisation's reputation?

#### (2) Economic

- Does the item or collection's use bring in additional revenue for the organisation?
- Does the item or collection's use generate indirect revenue for the neighbourhood, municipality, region or country?
- Does it attract additional visitors?



### Celebrate on a Dutch East India Company ship

The 'Amsterdam', an exact replica of the famous Dutch East India Company ship that sank on its maiden voyage in 1749, is one of the main attractions at the National Maritime Museum. It is regarded as one of the museum's showpieces. For families with children in particular, the ship marks a high point in their visit. The ship itself has no historical value; it is a replica, after all. But because it attracts so many visitors and is available as an events venue, it can be assigned a high economic value, over and above its perception value and museum value.

Replica of the Dutch  
East India Company  
ship 'Amsterdam', Het  
Scheepvaartmuseum,  
photo Eddo Hartmann



### Development potential

In addition to the valuation based on the various criteria, the valuation form provides room to describe an object or collection's development potential. Can its current assigned value be increased, and if so, how? Ways to do so include researching an item or collection's provenance, improving its condition through restoration, or placing it in a more

appropriate context. Objects about which little is known are sometimes kept because people believe that additional information might be unearthed through more extensive research, which will enhance the culture historical, social and societal and/or use values.



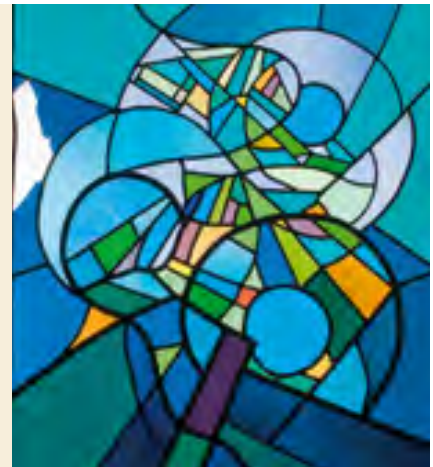
### The cupboard laid bare

Acquired at an auction in 1943, a miniature cabinet in the Netherlands Open Air Museum collection was believed to have originated from the province of Friesland, perhaps the island of Ameland. It was dated to the seventeenth century. A recent study examined the different types of wood, layers of paint and varnish, pigments, patinas, stains and the marks left by tools. And what did they find? The nails were made after 1860 and pigments such as titanium white showed that the paint must have been applied after 1920. What had been viewed as a rare relic of the domestic culture of a seventeenth-century community proved to be the work of decorative painters and antique dealers from the early twentieth century. The cabinet's culture history value for the Netherlands Open Air Museum has therefore fallen sharply. On the other hand, however, its information value has risen. It is now a well-researched object that has been used to reveal the story behind many comparable items.

This '17th-century' miniature cabinet was revealed as the work of decorative painters and antique dealers from the early 20th century

### Experiment from above

The stained glass window entitled *Flight*, which has been in the Cultural Heritage Agency's collection since 1952, was assessed as having a low value because so little was known about it. And not much more was known about the artist Piet Kraus (1909-1974) than that he worked in Dordrecht, was a drawing teacher and that a number of his works were added to the State collection under the artists' subsidy scheme (BKR). Research has revealed an unexpected story behind this window, however. It was made in 1949 following an initiative by the Foundation of Dutch Painters' commissioning committee. At the invitation of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, artists were given an opportunity to view the earth from above and to incorporate their impressions into their work. Because this was the first experiment of this kind, *Flight* today has a higher historical value. The story behind it lends it a certain perception value.



*Vlucht (flight)*, Piet Kraus, stained glass window, 134.5 x 117 cm, 1952



The NS D 4088 baggage car is part of permanent 'Laden trains' exhibition at the Dutch Railway Museum. Photo Anna van Kooij

### Baggage car NS D 4088

In 2003 a German rail enthusiast alerted the Railway Museum to a Dutch baggage car that had been spotted in Bucharest, Romania. Photos revealed that it was a three-axle carriage built by Werkspoor in Amsterdam in 1914. The factory plates were still in place. During World War Two the baggage car had been taken eastward, where it ended up behind the Iron Curtain. Following an on-site inspection, the museum decided to bring it back to the Netherlands. It would also be exhibited in its authentic condition, to show part of its history. In 2007 the original serial number – D 4088 – was uncovered under a layer of rust. It is a fine example of an object with immense development potential. It had little value in the Romanian context, but it has acquired a new significance now that it is part of the Dutch Railway Museum collection. The fact that we now know more about its provenance has boosted the baggage car's value.

In the 'Development potential' column on the valuation form you can indicate whether you think there is considerable, some, little or no potential for increasing the value of an item or collection.

- Can research into the provenance, the materials used or the history of use yield knowledge that will increase the culture historical, and/or use values?
- Can the value increase through research, restoration or placement in a more appropriate context?
- Does the item or collection offer possibilities for use that are not currently being exploited? For example, can it be used to tell a story as part of a presentation or for education purposes?
- Can a non-functioning object be made operational again (e.g. fixing a clock that has stopped working, making an installation move again)?
- Can the item or collection be made accessible in additional ways (e.g. online)?

If an item or collection has a high development potential, this means that there are excellent opportunities for enhancing its value, and that investing in value development would be worthwhile. High potential usually goes hand in hand with a relatively low valuation. Generally speaking, a highly valued item will have less development potential because the necessary research has already been done.

In the next column on the valuation form, describe what actions the museum must undertake to develop the value. This could involve improving the condition to increase the artistic and presentation value, or researching the provenance, history or manufacture.

There is a distinction between use values and usefulness. The use values relate to the actual, current use of an item or collection, whereas usefulness relates to its *potential* use. In the 'Development potential' column on the valuation form, you can record possibilities for increasing the use values, along with other values.

## STEP 5:

### processing the assessment

There are different ways that you can process the results of the previous steps. Depending on the motive and the question behind the valuation, the end result could be:

- a statement of significance  
You can synthesise the results of the assessment, together with the supporting arguments, in a concise and reasoned summary that sets out the values of the item or collection for the various stakeholders, based on the question and within the chosen reference framework. You should also state how the item or collection relates in terms of value to the items or collections with which it is being compared. The statement of significance is a useful tool for communicating to others how and why an item or collection is significant.
- a value ranking or grouping  
You can compare the value of items or collections that are assessed within the same reference framework. You can draw up a reasoned ranking or organise items or collections into value categories, such as highlights, core collection, adjunct collection, props or a somewhat cruder classification into museum and non-museum collection. Natural history museums, for example, usually make a distinction between scientific and educational collections. You can use this classification to determine how you will deal with the various parts of the collection, such as loan policy, storage conditions and the degree of physical deterioration that is acceptable.
- an investment plan  
By comparing the current valuation with the development potential, you can set priorities for investing in value development. Where are there opportunities for value development? What activities will generate the highest increase in value? What activities present the greatest opportunities for increasing value?

**Suggestion.** Summarise the end result of the valuation. Bodies outside the museum – such as local authorities, arts councils, cultural consultancies, foundations and funding bodies – will find this more useful than a detailed multi-page report.

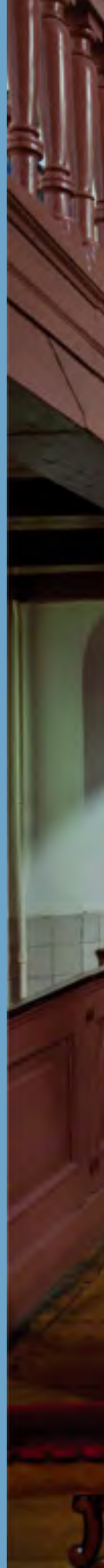


Curator of *Our Lord in the Attic* Museum

## Thijs Boers

‘H ere, at *Our Lord in the Attic*, it all started with a seventeenth-century staircase. The stairs were showing serious signs of wear and eventually no-one dared use them any longer. We got so many visitors and this probably came at the cost of our heritage building. So we carried out a risk analysis for the whole museum – the building, the attic church and the objects. A study was also made of building’s construction history and the history of the inhabitants. This is what prompted the valuation of our collection. And what did we find? The actual building was unique for the Netherlands. No other seventeenth-century example was as well preserved as ours. But we didn’t want to enshrine it in a glass case and leave everything as it was. It didn’t take us long to decide: the building itself came first, which meant adopting a different approach to the collection. For example, a number of vulnerable paintings were hanging on the damp, cold wall on the northern side. Instead of finding a modern solution, we simply moved the paintings to a drier spot. In this way *Our Lord in the Attic* was transformed from a museum into a historic house. And that’s why a curator was appointed especially for the building, namely me. I found out more and more about the house – the technical details of its construction, the building materials, the inhabitants, the use of colour. Each of these individual discoveries was important for the major restoration project that will soon be completed. The attic church has been restored to its nineteenth-century appearance – that was the last time that the church still functioned as a church. The reddish-brown marbling from that period has been revealed on half of the altar, while the other half has been repainted to match. The other colour layers of earlier marbling are still underneath, which means it can be brought back to a different stage again. Because who knows? People may have access to entirely new information in two hundred years’ time. ’

Thijs Boers at the high altar  
of the church in *Our Lord in the Attic*







## STEP 6:

### decision or action

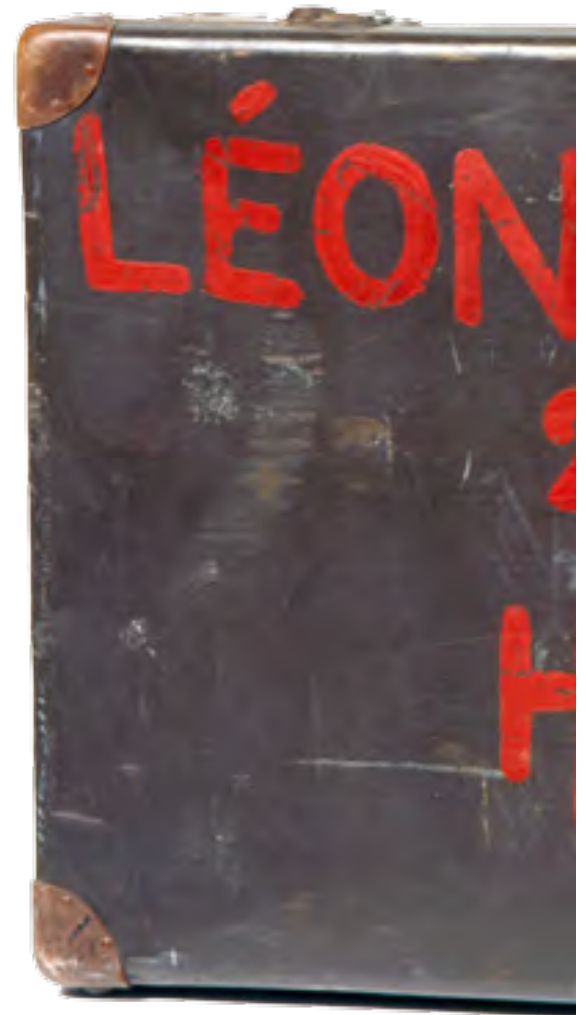
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Use the end product of the valuation as a starting point and rationale for new decisions or actions. You can use it to better substantiate the item or collection's value, to discuss its significance with users or the public, to increase accessibility or to decide on interventions. You can also use it when conducting a risk analysis, to set preservation and management priorities or to discuss conflicting interests.

A valuation is not set in stone – it can change over time. Because a statement of significance is drawn up on the basis of a specific, predetermined motive and question and within a particular reference framework, it has a limited validity and scope. You mustn't view it as an absolute indicator of significance, but as a tool containing information that may also be useful at other times. Although the main aspects of

an item or collection tend to be more or less fixed, it is important to remember that 'value' can change: it can increase, decrease or be further developed, for example, if new information comes to light.

*When the question behind a valuation changes, or there is change in the composition of the valuation team, this may affect the outcome. It may then be necessary to review the valuation. Additional information or new knowledge about an item or collection may also affect the outcome.*



### Léon Cohen's suitcase

The emotional value of an item or collection can also change over time. The Jewish Historical Museum has a suitcase that belonged to Léon Albertus Alexander Cohen (1898-1980) as part of its current display. When Cohen, a Jewish Amsterdammer and a police inspector, was transported in spring 1943, he was permitted to take just one suitcase containing his belongings. He arrived in the Westerbork transit camp, where he became administrator of the staff barracks. When he and 900 fellow prisoners were liberated on 12 April 1945, he returned to Amsterdam – together with his suitcase. Thirty years ago there was little interest in items of this kind but the suitcase has since become an iconic image. This is because so many World War Two photos have been published of people waiting to be transported, suitcase in hand, many of whom did not survive the war. It is for this reason that these suitcases are now valued, collected and put on display.



Léon Cohen's  
suitcase.  
Jewish  
Historical  
Museum  
collection

Curator of the Willet-Holthuysen Museum  
and the Amsterdam Museum

## Hubert Vreeken

‘**W**hen we completed the valuation at Willet-Holthuysen, there was just one possible conclusion – where feasible, we wanted to return the decor of the canal house to its nineteenth-century state, back to the time when the Willets lived there. We still had many objects from their estate that they’d ordered especially for their home – chairs, dinner sets, silver, porcelain, clocks, coffee tables, glassware. Only the interior textiles were a problem. We took two lines of approach. The first was restoration, which is very costly. We bought expensive runners, a typically nineteenth-century item, and laid them in all the hallways and on the staircase. Secondly, we did something that I call minimising intervention, searching for maximum effect with a minimum of resources. For the curtains, for instance, we bought material at the Albert Cuyp market and simply had them made. They’ve turned out very nicely – and are respectful of the Willets. After that, it was time for reflection. What else did we want to do? Our intention was to showcase domestic culture in the museum, not just present a house with things in it. So now our museum tells a story – about the inhabitants and the servants. You can get this sense of upstairs-downstairs through the table that is set in the chic dining room, with the dessert service, the candles that look as though they’ve just been extinguished and a napkin still lying on the seat of a chair that’s been pulled out. Above this room we’ve organised the old pantry so that it looks as though the housekeeper is still about. The narrow passageway that servants used to enter the ballroom – to replenish the wine glasses – has been opened up again. And in the kitchen we displayed a range of gifts over the Christmas period – skeins of wool, cheese, sausage, clogs. That was typical of Mrs Willet, who on these occasions would often donate presents to the parish to give to the Amsterdam poor. These would be collected in the kitchen and wrapped up. By making these modifications, both large and small, we are aiming to bring the nineteenth-century Willet household to life for visitors. ’











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# Glossary

## Artistic value

An item or collection has artistic value if it shows artistry, creativity, technical accomplishment or originality of idea, form or function, or if it is a good example of the work of a particular artist, designer or architect. Other considerations are the degree to which the item or collection exemplifies a particular style, design or artistic movement.

## Collection management

The strategic deployment of people and resources in such a way as to optimise the use, preservation and development of a collection.

## Collection plan

A document that sets out the scope and composition of a collection, describes the policy with regard to that collection, and translates that policy into specific action items.

## Condition

The state of an item or collection.

## Culture historical value

The valuation method distinguishes three culture historical criteria: historical, artistic and information value. Values assigned on the basis of these criteria can be increased or decreased through the features. An item or collection that satisfies one or more culture historical criteria may be considered part of cultural heritage.

## Development potential

Development potential is the extent to which there

are opportunities for developing the significance of an item or collection, for example by conducting further research or by improving its condition. This can enhance its culture historical, social and/or use values.

## Economic value

Economic value does not refer to the financial value of an item or collection, but to the extent to which it generates revenue for the organisation, neighbourhood, municipality or region, or attracts additional visitors.

## Ensemble value

The extent to which there is a relationship between an item or collection and the rest of the collection, the institution (museum) and the environment, or the relationship between the elements that make up an item or collection.

## Features

Four features – condition, ensemble value, provenance and rarity/representativeness – that can be used to describe an item or collection. Assessment against these four criteria does not lead to a valuation, but can strengthen or weaken the substantive criteria (culture historical, social and use).

## Historical value

An item or collection has historical significance if it is associated with important historical people, events, places, periods, themes or communities, or if says something about a particular historical period, process, development, theme, zeitgeist or way of life.

**Information value**

An item or collection has information value if information can be ‘read’ from it or if it contains elements that support scientific or scholarly research – now or in the future.

**Museum value**

Museum value is the degree to which an item or collection can be used today for presentation, educational and research purposes.

**Perception value**

The perception value of an item or collection is the degree to which it evokes sensations, emotions and associations in the viewer. It involves an individual experience that acquires a collective character when shared by a large group of people.

**Provenance**

The documented history of the origins, use and acquisition of an item or collection.

**Rarity**

The degree to which an item or collection is exceptional.

**Reference framework**

The framework in which an item or collection is valued. This could be international, national, regional or local, or within your own organisation or a particular group or community.

**Representativeness**

The degree to which an item or collection is representative of a particular period, place, style, movement, use, theme, community, etc.

**Significance**

The *combination* of various values – from historical to social – determines the significance of an item or collection.

**Social and societal value**

The current social, religious, political, community or spiritual significance that an item or collection has for a group or community. When this meaning is no longer current, we speak of social history value or historical value.

**Social value**

An item or collection has social value when an attachment exists between it and a group or community.

**Stakeholder**

A person, group or community that attaches a special value to an item or collection, or has a current attachment to or a particular interest in it.

**Statement of significance**

A concise and reasoned summary of the values of an item or collection for particular stakeholders. It is drawn up in response to a question, on the basis of previously established and defined criteria, and within an appropriate reference framework.

**Use values**

Values that relate to the actual current use of an item or collection.

**Valuation framework**

The framework in which a valuation is conducted. It comprises a combination of question, reference framework, criteria and stakeholders.

**Value**

The value of an item or collection is what makes it significant. The value is arrived at in response to a question, within an appropriate reference framework, tested against previously established and defined criteria, and for particular stakeholders.

**Valuing**

**Valuing involves making reasoned and verifiable statements about the value of an item or collection**, in response to a question, based on previously established and defined criteria, within an appropriate reference framework and for particular stakeholders.

# Valuation form

The information on this part of the form is used throughout the valuation and can be copied each time to a new form.

Motive for the valuation: \_\_\_\_\_ Conducted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Question behind the valuation: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference framework for the valuation plus arguments: \_\_\_\_\_  
use the reference framework as a guide if necessary

|                     |  | Defining the valuation framework   |     |        |      |
|---------------------|--|--|-----|--------|------|
|                     |  | Describe the conditions that an item, collection or subcollection must meet in order to be rated as high, medium or low under the different criteria.  |     |        |      |
| Criteria            |  | Prompt questions   | Low | Medium | High |
| Features            | Condition (state, intactness, material authenticity, material integrity)   | Is the item/collection in good condition, is it complete, is it in its original state, is it suitable for reuse?   |     |        |      |
|                     | Ensemble (completeness, unity, cohesion, conceptual integrity, conceptual authenticity, contextual authenticity) | Is the item/collection made up of parts which together form a whole? How? Is the whole complete?   |     |        |      |
|                     | Provenance (documentation, life story, biography, source, pedigree)  | Is the provenance of the item/collection known, documented, reliable?  |     |        |      |
|                     | Rarity and representativeness (uniqueness, exemplar value, prototype, type exemplar)                             | Is object/collectie uniek, in de wereld, in het land, binnen de collectie? Is het in hoge mate representatief voor een bepaalde periode, plaats, stijl, stroming, gebruik, thema, gemeenschap?   |     |        |      |
| Culture historical  | Historical (biographical, social history, natural history, technological history, scientific history)            | Is there an association with a particular historical person, group, event, place, activity? Is there an association with a particular period, process, theme, development, zeitgeist or way of life?   |     |        |      |
|                     | Artistic (art historical, architectural history, design, workmanship, decorative)                                | Is object/collectie bijzonder om zijn ontwerp, concept, uitvoering, vormgeving, techniek, creativiteit? Is het een representant van een bepaalde stijl, stroming, kunstenaar?  |     |        |      |
|                     | Information value (scholarship, science, research, documentation, reference, testimony, archival)                | Is the item/collection kept because of the information that it contains and can this be studied?   |     |        |      |
| Social and societal | Social (social, spiritual, religious, political, symbolic, community, identity)                                  | Does the item/collection fulfil a certain function for a particular group or community today? Are there groups that have a current special attachment to the item? Does it have a current social, religious, political, community meaning?<br>Does the item currently play a decisive role in the identity of a group? |     |        |      |
|                     | Perception (emotions, senses, aesthetic, association)  | Does the item/collection evoke a certain collective experience?<br>Does it emanate a particular atmosphere? Does it evoke emotions? Does it play on the senses in a particular way?  |     |        |      |
| Use                 | Museum (presentation, education, research)   | Is the item/collection currently used for presentation, educational, research purposes? Does it play a special role in an exhibition? Is it the subject of publications?   |     |        |      |
|                     | Economic (working capital, financial, PR, spin-off, tourism, reputation)   | Does the item/collection generate revenue for the organisation? Does it attract visitors? Does it play a decisive role in the organisation's profile and reputation?   |     |        |      |
| Additional          | Fill in  | Describe   |     |        |      |
|                     | Fill in  | Describe   |     |        |      |

\* Valuation

The valuation score can be expressed in words, for example 'low', 'medium', 'high'. If a criterion does not apply, enter 'NA' (not applicable).

In the following box, give the arguments for the score.

Particulars of item, collection or subcollection: \_\_\_\_\_

In the following box, describe what can be done to utilise the potential.



# Reference framework form

This form can be used to record what is being valued (scope) and which stakeholders attach value to the item, collection or subcollection and within which reference framework.

[illegible]





What is the value of a museum collection or object?  
Who decides this value and how?

*Assessing Museum Collections. Collection valuation in six steps* is a practical guide for assigning different kinds of value to items and collections. This publication is aimed at anyone involved in the professional management of a collection.

The Cultural Heritage Agency provides knowledge and advice to give the future a past.

