

Code of Ethics

COOS ART MUSEUM

Approved by the CAM Board of Directors
MAY 2025



Vision Statement

We envision a world where art is accessible to all and fosters creativity, cultural appreciation, and personal growth.

Mission Statement

Coos Art Museum serves as a cultural resource for Oregon's South Coast through exhibitions and educational programs that inspire appreciation and exploration of visual art.

Values

Bringing our vision to life and fulfilling our mission begins with a commitment to certain core values that guide our work. Coos Art Museum is devoted to the following core values:

Community

We believe the arts foster a vibrant tapestry of creativity, imagination, and expression that enriches our lives, sparks innovation, and fosters deep connections across cultures and generations.

Learning

We offer arts education as a fundamental cornerstone of holistic development, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and empathy, while empowering individuals to explore their unique identities.

Accessibility

We strive to make the arts intellectually, physically, and economically accessible to everyone.

Equity

We endeavor to create a culture of diversity, access, and inclusivity that is represented in the museum's collection, exhibitions, and educational programs, and among members of the Board, staff, and volunteers.

Stewardship

We are responsible stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to our care.



Our History

Coos Art Museum grew out of the Coos Artists League, founded in 1950 by Janice Scott and a committed group of local artists who organized exhibitions and programs in libraries, businesses, and U.S. Coast Guard stations. The League established the Museum's first permanent home in the historic Carnegie Library, which opened as Coos Art Museum in 1966 after volunteer-led renovations and early partnerships.

By the late 1970s the Museum needed greater space for its expanding collection and public programs. Community leaders and residents rallied behind a major effort to relocate the Museum to the decommissioned 1936 Art Deco post office, a prominent downtown landmark. Voters approved a funding measure in 1983 that allowed the City to acquire and renovate the building, which opened as the Museum's new home in 1984.

Current operations and programs

The Museum operates in the restored Art Deco facility, housing galleries, offices, storage, and spaces dedicated to community partners. As the only art museum on the Oregon Coast and the third-oldest art museum in Oregon, the organization stewards a Permanent Collection of more than 650 artworks, various collections of canvas artworks, a Library and Archive documenting the Museum's and general art history, a Rental Sales Gallery, and the historic building in which it operates. The Museum presents up to twenty rotating exhibitions each year, showcasing work from local, regional, national, and international artists to create a cultural experience for audiences throughout the year.

Education remains central to the Museum's purpose. Through classes, workshops, outreach efforts, and public programs designed for participants of all ages, the Museum encourages lifelong engagement with the arts. Programming focuses on fine art skills like drawing, painting, and ceramics, as well as general crafting projects that are designed to get everyone's creativity flowing. The organization expanded its educational footprint through the addition of the CAM Studio, which supports hands-on learning, youth programming, and community partnerships.

Guided by its mission to serve as a cultural resource for Oregon's South Coast through exhibitions and educational programs that inspire appreciation and exploration of visual art, Coos Art Museum operates as a creative hub for the region. Its work supports artistic growth and fosters connections shaped by the diverse experiences of the South Coast community.

Ethical Duties

Coos Art Museum (CAM) is dedicated to enriching the cultural and artistic life of Oregon's South Coast, with a steadfast commitment to prioritizing the public's interest over that of individuals or the institution. Upholding the highest ethical standards, best practices, and legal requirements is essential to fulfilling our mission. This Code of Ethics outlines our ethical duties and obligations and applies to all board members and staff. It ensures that CAM operates with integrity, transparency, and accountability.

Our commitment to this Code reflects our dedication to preserving and protecting the public's trust. The Board of Directors and Executive Director oversee its implementation, ensuring that all actions align with our mission and exceed legal minimums. Regular audits will be conducted to maintain compliance, and robust policies will be in place to address any ethical challenges or dilemmas.



This Code is integral to CAM's governance and is maintained alongside other key policies guiding the work of individual departments. These materials are meant to supplant, not replace, other legal policies or procedures the Museum maintains.

Governance

The Board of Directors of Coos Art Museum holds the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the Museum operates in the public's interest, upholding the highest ethical standards. As the governing authority, the Board is accountable to both the public and the institution, overseeing the formulation and maintenance of policies that guide the Museum's mission.

The Board's responsibilities include:

- **Setting Vision and Strategy:** The Board establishes the Museum's vision, mission, and strategic direction, approving the strategic plan, objectives, and budget to ensure alignment with community interests.
- **Oversight and Empowerment:** While the Board empowers the Executive Director to manage day-to-day operations, it maintains oversight to ensure that all actions reflect the Museum's ethical commitments and public trust.
- **Conflict of Interest and Integrity:** Board members must avoid conflicts of interest and act solely in the Museum's best interest, using information gained during their service only to benefit the institution.
- **Policy Development:** The Board develops, administers, and advocates for policies that promote fair, consistent, and equitable treatment across all Museum activities.
- **Financial Responsibility:** Ensuring sufficient funding and financial protection for the Museum, the Board safeguards the institution's assets and ensures compliance with legal and ethical standards.
- **Accountability and Compliance:** The Board ensures that all Museum policies and activities comply with legal requirements and that the Museum's non-profit status is never compromised.

The Board collaborates with the Executive Director, who is entrusted with managing the Museum's daily operations. This relationship is built on mutual trust, with the Board providing strategic oversight and the Executive Director executing the Museum's mission within the established ethical framework.

The Executive Director should nurture the intellectual and aesthetic philosophy of the Museum. The Executive Director is responsible for administration that is consistent with established policy and enables staff members to perform to the full extent of their abilities. The Executive Director should foster such values and practices as collaboration, communication, respect, and delegation of duties. (Hereafter, references to the Executive Director mean the Executive Director in consultation with staff, as appropriate.)

Conflict of Interest

To maintain transparency and uphold the Museum's mission, board members and staff must immediately disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. These include affiliations with related institutions, receipt of gifts, loans, outside employment, personal collecting, political activities, and the use of the Museum's assets or information for personal gain. The Museum has established procedures to address conflicts, which may include recusal from decision-making processes and, if necessary, seeking independent review to ensure impartiality and protect the Museum's integrity. No individual may use their position for personal gain or to benefit another at the expense of the Museum, its mission, its reputation, or the public it serves.



Use of Museum's Property and Services

No person may use the Museum's collection, programs, personnel, or services for their own benefit in a manner not permitted by members of the museum generally, except in accordance with procedures duly adopted by the Board. No board member or employee who is an artist shall exhibit artwork created by themselves in a Museum exhibition. However, artworks created by employees and board members may be used for fundraising, special events, or special exhibitions specifically designed for those groups.

Personal Collecting

A possibility for conflict of interest, or appearance of such, exists whenever board members, employees, or volunteers personally collect objects of a type collected by the Museum. Nonetheless, personal art collecting is encouraged, subject to the following guidelines:

- Such persons shall not become involved in any transactions that by virtue of their office give rise to a conflict of interest. Specifically, no employee or trustee may knowingly compete with the Museum for acquisition of an art work. Additionally, although the loan of objects by board members and/or employees can be of benefit, it should be recognized that an exhibition can enhance the value of the object and therefore objectivity should be used in such cases.
- Employees and board members shall not buy from, sell to, or trade works of art with the Museum except where the specific transaction is approved in writing by the Board of Directors.
- Board Members, employees, and volunteers may not use their institutional affiliation to promote their own or an associate's personal collecting or business activities. No staff member may participate in any dealing (buying or selling for profit as distinguished from occasional sale or exchange from a personal collection) in objects similar or related to the objects collected by the Museum.
- The guidelines outlined above do not apply to objects acquired prior to the adoption of this Code of Ethics or prior versions, objects acquired prior to employment or service, or objects acquired through bequests or as genuine personal gifts.

Art Dealing

No board member or employee shall use their affiliation with the Museum to promote an independent art dealing business. Upgrading a personal collection by occasional trades or purchases is not considered dealing in works of art.

Personal Gifts

All personal gifts to employees from artists, dealers, and suppliers with whom the Museum transacts business shall be limited to the value of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00). Gifts valued at more than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00) can be accepted only if approved by the Board of Directors. Gifts of works of art from artists whose work is exhibited at the Museum to any employee or board member shall be accepted by the employee or board member only with the approval of the Board of Directors. Any such gift not so approved shall become part of the Museum's collection. Meals, accommodations, and travel services while on official business should not be accepted except when it is clear that acceptance of such services will not compromise the professional judgment of the staff member or the reputation of the Museum.

Gifts can also include offers of outside employment or other advantageous arrangements that are related to an aspect of the Museum's operations. Outside employment that does not relate to the Museum's operations is not considered a conflict of interest and does not need to be approved by the Board of Directors.



Board Service

Board Members often support multiple causes and institutions through board service, which is encouraged by the Museum as it strengthens ties within the community. Board members must disclose any board service which may result in a conflict of interest detrimental to the Museum or result in the sharing of protected and proprietary information.

Disclosure and Abstention

Whenever a matter arises that could be perceived as a conflict between the interests of the Museum and an outside or personal interest of board member, employee, volunteer, or a family member of one of the foregoing, the respective board member, employee, volunteer should bring the matter to the attention of their supervisor or the Board of Directors for disclosure and resolution. If a board member becomes aware that the Board of Directors is considering a matter that may involve a conflict of interest, the board member must notify the Board of Directors. A board member shall not vote on, approve, or recommend any action which they have an actual or potential conflict of interest. The board member must leave any meeting during discussion and vote related to matters that involve an actual conflict of interest.

Collections

Coos Art Museum's collections are held in trust for the public, supporting the Museum's mission to foster appreciation and understanding of visual arts. We are committed to ethical stewardship, ensuring that all collections-related activities serve the public interest.

- **Acquisition:** All acquisitions are conducted legally and ethically, aligned with the Museum's mission. Provenance research is crucial to verify the authenticity, ownership history, and ethical integrity of each artwork.
- **Care and Preservation:** The Museum is dedicated to the meticulous care, preservation, and storage of its collections, ensuring they are preserved for future generations. We adhere to best practices in preservation to maintain the integrity of each work.
- **Cataloguing and Documentation:** Cataloguing and documenting the collections are basic responsibilities of Museum staff. The information should represent sound scholarship and the staff's informed judgment, independent of any external pressures. Other scholarly opinions, including dissenting opinions concerning a work of art, should be recorded. Major changes in attribution and dating, as well as any serious questions concerning authenticity, should be reported to the Board and made available to the public.
- **Deaccessioning:** The Museum may deaccession artworks only through a transparent and ethical process. The deaccessioning process requires thorough research on prior ownership, donor intent, and scholarly evaluation before deaccessioning. All funds received from the sale of deaccessioned works shall be used exclusively for the acquisition or the direct care of objects in the Museum's permanent collection.
- **Culturally Sensitive Artworks:** The Museum acknowledges the significance of culturally sensitive artworks, such as indigenous or sacred pieces. Should such artworks enter our collection, they will be managed with the utmost respect and in consultation with relevant communities, ensuring adherence to cultural, ethical, and legal standards.
- **Adherence to Art-Specific Laws:** The Museum rigorously complies with all relevant laws specific to art, including those governing cultural property, intellectual property, and repatriation.



- **Truth in Presentation:** The Museum is committed to the accurate and respectful presentation of all artworks, ensuring that exhibitions and educational materials faithfully represent the art's cultural, historical, and artistic contexts.
- **Appraisals:** To maintain impartiality and avoid conflicts of interest, the Museum does not provide appraisals for private collections or outside parties.

This section is consistent with the Museum's Collections Management Policy, ensuring that our ethical commitments to art stewardship are clear and upheld throughout all operations.

Public Trust and Accountability

Coos Art Museum serves as a public trust, holding its collections, programs, and operations in stewardship for the community. We recognize our responsibility to the public and commit to:

- **Transparency:** Providing clear and accessible information about our activities, governance, finances, and decision-making processes.
- **Inclusivity:** Engaging with and serving all members of our community, ensuring that our programs and collections are representative and accessible.
- **Accountability:** Making decisions that are consistent with our mission and values and being responsive to the needs and concerns of the public.

The Museum will actively engage our community through regular public reports, open meetings, and feedback mechanisms. Transparency in decision-making processes will be prioritized, with clear communication channels established to ensure the public's voice is heard and integrated into the Museum's operations and strategic planning.

Programs, Exhibitions, and Interpretation

CAM's programs serve our mission, reflect the goals of our strategic plan, and offer our audience edification and enrichment. Such programs, including, among others, exhibitions, classes, and special events, should present and interpret works of art and expand public understanding of the scope of human creativity.

Artistic and educational excellence, public engagement, and accessibility must be primary considerations when planning our public programs. Other valid considerations include attendance, revenue potential, and media response.

Within the context of our mission, we aim to serve as broad a public as possible by offering a range of programs that provide experiences with works of art. Ideas and information must be based on principles of sound scholarship, respect for artistic expression, and the ability to engage the public.

Except in situations that prohibit the sale of artwork, Coos Art Museum allows exhibiting artists to sell their works directly, without taking commissions, except during fundraising events. The Museum does not set prices or handle transactions; all sales are managed by the artists themselves. This approach aims to provide financial support to artists and strengthen the Museum's relationship with the local art community. By offering a platform to sell art, the Museum attracts more artists to exhibit, creating an incentive for participation. Visitors also benefit, enjoying the chance to purchase art directly from artists, enhancing their engagement and connection with the works on display.



The Rental Sales Gallery, as a retail-based revenue stream, takes a commission on artwork rentals and sales. As a revenue-generating business line, it is not considered a regular exhibition space and is classified under Operations in Museum budgeting and finances.

We are committed to ensuring that all programs have:

- **Intellectual Integrity:** All exhibitions and educational programs are grounded in rigorous scholarship, ensuring accuracy and integrity in every presentation.
- **Varied Perspectives:** We actively include a wide range of voices and perspectives, reflecting the cultural and artistic variety of our community and the broader world.
- **Accessibility:** Our programs are designed to be accessible to the widest possible audience, regardless of ability, background, or economic status, ensuring that everyone can engage with the arts.

Museum Management Practices

Fundraising and Financial Accountability

The Museum is committed to ethical practices in fundraising and financial management. The Board carries full responsibility for financial and investment policies and approves the budget of the Museum. Any significant change in the Museum's financial condition must be addressed by the Board in consultation with the Executive Director, who must regularly inform the Board of any actual or anticipated changes in income or expenditures.

Donors are recognized and treated with respect, and the Museum is transparent about how donations are used to support its mission. The Museum maintains accurate and transparent financial records, ensuring that all funds are used in alignment with our mission and goals. The Museum is committed to financial sustainability, ensuring that our operations and programs are maintained responsibly over the long term.

The Museum adheres to the following standards with respect to fundraising:

- The Museum welcomes appropriate cooperation with similar organizations to further its goals.
- The Museum is in ultimate control of educational content in exhibits and programs. The recognition of external donors or sponsors is secondary.
- The Museum will acknowledge corporate support but will not specifically endorse any corporation, its products, or services.
- The Museum's reputation is one of its most precious assets and in no way shall any sponsorship diminish that reputation. In the case of some breach of morals, the sponsorship shall be dissolved.
- Those involved in fundraising must do so with honesty as to need and must use funds for a donor's intended purposes. Opportunities and advantages shall be promised to donors equally.
- All donor-related records and documents shall be confidential, except as required by law.
- The Museum shall keep standard accounting records.
- Those authorized to spend funds must do so with impartiality, honesty, and in the Museum's best interest.

A Welcoming Arts Community

At Coos Art Museum, we believe that art is for everyone. We're committed to being a welcoming and inclusive gathering place where people of all backgrounds and life experiences feel seen, valued, and inspired.

We invite community voices to help shape our exhibitions and programs, support a wide range of artists, and create spaces that are accessible, vibrant, and meaningful. Our goal is to make sure everyone feels a sense of belonging—whether visiting, creating, learning, or leading.



To help foster this welcoming environment, we strive to:

- Learn and grow in how we connect with and serve our community.
- Be open about how we work and make decisions.
- Continually improve our programs, policies, and services with input from others.
- Support leadership that reflects the variety of our region.

Commitment to Professionalism

Coos Art Museum is committed to standards of professionalism in all aspects of its operations. This commitment ensures that the Museum's practices are ethical, transparent, and consistent with best practices in the museum field. Our staff and board members are dedicated to continuous learning and adherence to professional guidelines, ensuring that all activities, from collections management to public programming, are conducted with the utmost integrity and respect for the Museum's mission and public trust responsibilities.

Ownership of Copyright

The products of work done for Coos Art Museum, on Museum time, belong to Coos Art Museum.

Compliance

Although ultimate fiduciary responsibility rests with the Board, the Executive Director is responsible for the daily monitoring of the institution's compliance with laws and regulations. Legal matters arising in the operation of the Museum include those pertaining to collections, exhibitions, personnel and labor relations, contracts, governance, finances, facilities, taxes, rights and reproductions, and events. The Board and Executive Director should share current information about legal issues and legislation relevant to the institution and museum standards.

Staff

The operation of Coos Art Museum relies on the dedication of our staff.

- **Respect and Support:** All individuals serving the Museum deserve respect and support from their peers, superiors, and the institution.
- **Fair Compensation:** Employees are entitled to fair pay and benefits commensurate with their training, performance, and contributions to the Museum's mission.
- **Personnel Policies:** The Museum maintains comprehensive personnel policies, approved by the Board, and made accessible to all staff.
- **Training and Expertise:** The Museum is committed to engaging staff with appropriate expertise and provides opportunities for further training to ensure they meet their responsibilities effectively.
- **Administrative Responsibility:** The Executive Director, as appointed by the Board, is solely responsible for the hiring, discipline, and dismissal of staff, in accordance with established policies.
- **Institutional Representation:** Actions by staff may reflect on the Museum, and all are expected to uphold the Museum's reputation.
- **Privacy and Non-Discrimination:** The Museum respects the privacy of all its stakeholders, acting in their best interests. Discrimination based on race/ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic status, geography, citizenship status, or religion is strictly prohibited.
- **Harassment and Fair Treatment:** The museum Maintains a zero-tolerance policy for harassment or discrimination and promotes an environment of fairness, courtesy, and professional integrity.



- **Confidentiality:** All individuals working at the Museum are expected to observe confidentiality and treat colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, avoiding relationships that could compromise professional judgment or the Museum's reputation.

Implementation, Compliance, and Training

To ensure adherence to Coos Art Museum's Code of Ethics, all board members and staff are required to undergo regular training that emphasizes the importance of ethical conduct and understanding of the Code.

In the event of a code violation, the Museum will take appropriate corrective actions, which may include retraining, disciplinary measures, or, in severe cases, termination of employment.

The Museum will also provide an acknowledgment form with the Code of Ethics, which all board members and staff must sign. By signing the acknowledgment form, individuals affirm their understanding and agreement to abide by the Code of Ethics and its associated policies, ensuring a shared commitment to upholding the Museum's mission and ethical standards.

Promulgation and Review

This Code of Ethics is a living document, reviewed and updated regularly to reflect the evolving needs of the Museum and the community. Board and staff members are responsible for upholding and actively reviewing this Code to ensure it meets the highest ethical standards.

The Board of Directors will conduct a formal review of the Code of Ethics every three years, or more frequently, if necessary, to reflect evolving standards and practices. This review process will include consultations with staff and community stakeholders to ensure the Code remains relevant and effective.

Originally approved: May 2025

Affirmed: February 2026



Affirmation and Commitment to Coos Art Museum Code of Ethics

Affirmation of Commitment

I affirm that I have read and understood the Coos Art Museum Code of Ethics. I understand that as a representative of the Museum, I have a responsibility to uphold the ethical principles and policies set forth in this document.

I commit to conducting myself in accordance with these principles and to disclosing any potential conflicts of interest, including those related to personal collecting activities, as they arise.

I understand that this signed affirmation will be kept on file as a condition of my ongoing service to the Museum.

Signature and Date

Name

Date