



## EXHIBITIONS POLICY

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees on September 16, 2014

*All references to the National Gallery of Canada include its affiliate, the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography (CMCP)*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The National Gallery of Canada (NGC, or the Gallery), through its exhibitions program, provides intellectual, physical and electronic access to the national collection and the world's visual arts heritage in Ottawa, across Canada, and beyond.

The exhibitions mandate derives from the *Museums Act*, 1990, (Part I, sections 5 and 6 (1)), which reads as follows: *to develop, maintain and make known, throughout Canada and internationally, a national collection of works of art, historic and contemporary, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada' and to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of art in general among all Canadians.*

In furtherance of its purposes, the National Gallery of Canada has the capacity and, subject to this Act, the rights, powers and privileges of a natural person and in particular, but without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the National Gallery of Canada may:

- Lend or borrow works of art and other museum material on long-term or short-term loan;
- Organize, sponsor, arrange for and participate in travelling exhibitions, in Canada and internationally, of works of art and other museum material in its collection and from other sources;
- Undertake and sponsor any research, including fundamental or basic research and theoretical and applied research, related to its purposes and to museology, and communicate the results of that research;
- Promote knowledge of and disseminate information about works of art and other museum material in its collection and art in general throughout Canada and internationally, by such means of education and communication as are appropriate;
- Share the expertise of its staff by undertaking and sponsoring programs or training and apprenticeship in the professional and technical skills involved in the operation of other organizations with purposes similar to its purposes;
- Provide and arrange for professional and technical services to other organizations with purposes similar to its purposes; and
- Develop, operate and maintain branches or exhibition centers.

## 2. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this Policy is to outline the principles that guide the development and implementation of the Gallery's exhibitions program, activities and products (hereto referred globally as "exhibitions program").

## 3. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This Policy applies to the full range of exhibitions programs offered by the National Gallery of Canada at its main facility in Ottawa, and presented elsewhere. Policy stakeholders include Gallery personnel responsible for the curatorial and exhibitions program.

The Gallery's exhibitions program is achieved with an understanding of the importance of the Gallery's Conservation Policy; exposure of the artworks and related physical preservation issues are managed accordingly.

## **4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EXHIBITIONS PROGRAM**

The exhibitions program at the National Gallery of Canada plays a central role in supporting the institution in achieving its core objectives and strategic priorities. Through a commitment to excellence in its presentation of a varied and balanced program of exhibitions, the Gallery seeks to develop audiences and make art broadly accessible for enjoyment, contemplation and understanding; and strives to ensure physical and electronic access to art for as large and diverse an audience as possible, throughout Canada and abroad.

This objective is reached by the following:

### **4.1 NGC Collection**

Emphasis is placed on the development of exhibitions which relate to the national collection in order to highlight and support the Gallery's collecting and acquisition strategies by:

- a) Building on the strengths of the permanent collection, including recent acquisitions and gifts;
- b) Affirming the presence of Canadian art in Canada and abroad;
- c) Presenting exhibitions from abroad and creating a dialogue between Canadian and International art; and
- d) Complementing underrepresented collecting areas, and showing art that is not represented in the collection.

### **4.2 Contemporary Art**

The Gallery promotes, in particular, contemporary Canadian art and contemporary art in general, through a balanced proportion of its exhibitions.

### **4.3 Indigenous Cultures**

The Gallery seeks to foster an awareness of the visual arts of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada, and the art of indigenous peoples in general. It does so through:

- a) Integration of Aboriginal art (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) within the chronological, historical installations of the Canadian art collection;
- b) Dedicated curatorial resources and dedicated gallery space for ongoing installations and rotations of the permanent collection of indigenous art; and
- c) Periodic special exhibitions programming highlighting Indigenous artists from Canada and abroad.

### **4.4 Outreach**

#### **4.4.1 Canadian Outreach**

As part of its commitment to a national presence and with a focus on long term sustainability, the Gallery achieves its Canadian outreach objectives by undertaking a variety of strategic collaborations with art museums in Canada. Reflecting the interest in increased input and collaborative partnerships from the Canadian museum community, these initiatives are adaptable and varied, and aim for, over time, a wide regional distribution of the national collection to reach a broad range of audiences across Canada:

- a) NGC@ Partnerships: Canadian museums with, year-round, high profile, dedicated spaces receive preferred-partner access to works from the NGC collection on a cost recovery basis. Where resources and time allow, larger collaborations with NGC@ Partners may be pursued on occasion.
- b) In association with the NGC: A framework allowing for large loan requests to the NGC to be assessed and defined, with appropriate cost and partner parameters.
- c) Occasional national/international tours: Where beneficial opportunities exist, the Gallery may organize or participate in exhibitions, which may be offered to our NGC@ Partners, other Canadian or international institutions. The programming emphasis is placed on works from the permanent collection and on curatorial expertise at the Gallery, as well as that of guest curators. Priority is given to projects that align with NGC interests, provided resources and time allow.
- d) Outgoing Loans Program: Fundamental to the Gallery's outreach activities, the Outgoing Loans Program serves a broad range of Canadian institutions, and is necessary for the NGC to remain competitive in pursuing prestigious international partnerships.
- e) Professional Council: Through its extensive professional network, the Gallery plays a leadership role in strengthening the capacity of art institutions in Canada through professional exchanges by curators and senior staff, enabling a forum for discussion of topics of relevance and arts policy issues.
- f) Special finite projects in support of special anniversaries, events, celebrations and other project opportunities of art museums in Canada and abroad. As a member of the Canadian Heritage Portfolio, the Gallery participates in portfolio-wide programming initiatives with other federal institutions and agencies in recognition of such events.

#### **4.4.2 International Outreach**

The Gallery will participate in initiatives related to international outreach in support of raising the Gallery's profile and in support of Canada's international profile as a source of exceptional art.

#### **4.5 Research and Education**

Exhibitions reflect the scholarly and academic role of the Gallery and serve as a platform for research, learning and excellence in many ways by:

- a) Publishing new research on works in the NGC, and other collections;
- b) Participating in research partnerships with other major museum and university partners, and making original contributions to art history in both Canadian and international areas of study;

- c) Promoting an understanding of the artistic process through related work in conservation and restoration and expanding opportunity for physical study of works that are not usually seen together; and
- d) Providing an opportunity for learning at all levels of education, for public and specialists.

## **4.6 NGC Profile**

### **4.6.1 National and International Collaboration**

One of the means by which the Gallery's reputation is maintained and its profile is heightened is through the research, organization and presentation of exhibitions. This involves ongoing strategic collaboration and partnerships, nationally and internationally, on exhibitions, loans, and other professional exchanges. Exhibitions may be organized by the Gallery alone, in collaboration with other institutions, or solely by other institutions.

### **4.6.2 Alignment with the Gallery's Fundraising Objectives**

The Gallery seeks private sector funding for exhibitions through its Advancement and Public Engagement Department and the National Gallery of Canada Foundation, thereby broadening the base both of financial support and of understanding in the community. The exhibitions program is closely aligned with the Gallery's advancement and NGC Foundation goals. They include: pursuing and building strategic links with donors, collectors and other stakeholders, special partnerships, sponsorships and other opportunities beneficial to the Gallery in profile building, visitor experience enhancement, revenue diversification, and future augmentation of the exhibitions program budget.

## **4.7 Cultural Diversity**

The Gallery acknowledges the broad cultural diversity of the Canadian population and audience today and believes that many forms of visual art-making should be represented in its exhibitions program. The exhibitions program will be broadened to the limits of its mandate where the Gallery has in-house expertise and/or, where additional resources are available, to seek expertise of a specialized guest curator and/or stage externally-organized exhibitions of the highest quality.

## **5. CRITERIA FOR PROGRAM SELECTION**

The Exhibitions Program Committee is a decision-making body for program selection at the Gallery. The Committee is guided by its Terms of Reference, which provide a clear description and criteria for way in which individual exhibitions are selected.

Program decisions are based on the following:

- a) Exhibitions must reflect the mandate of the NGC;
- b) Exhibition content and development must be based on artistic and scholarly excellence;

- c) Exhibitions must reflect the Gallery's aim to provide knowledge, educate and communicate about art;
- d) The exhibition schedule must respond, as much as possible, to periods of maximum accessibility and suitability for visitors throughout the year; and
- e) Exhibitions must be consistent with resources and time available.

## **6. SOURCES OF ARTWORK FOR EXHIBITIONS**

The exhibitions program regularly includes exhibitions based on works from the NGC national collection, and in this way, the collection is used to maximum advantage as a national resource.

The Gallery also actively borrows artworks from other museums, private collections or other sources to realize its exhibition objectives: to present work not contained in the collection, to position artworks in dialogue with related works, to participate in exhibition and research partnerships with other museums, and to present exhibitions programming of the highest quality to Canadian audiences.

## **7. Exhibitions Program Approval**

On the recommendation of the Director and CEO, the Board of Trustees, through its Programmes and Advancement Committee, is responsible for approving the exhibitions program.

## **8. INQUIRIES**

Questions concerning the interpretation of this policy should be addressed to the Chief, Exhibitions Management.

## **REFERENCES**

- *Copyright Act (1985)*
- *Museums Act, (1990)*
- *Official Languages Act (1985)*
- *NGC Acquisitions Policy*
- *NGC Communications Policy*
- *NGC Conservation Policy*
- *NGC Education Policy*
- *NGC Research Policy*
- *NGC Values, Ethics and Code of Conduct*
- *NGC Exhibitions Program Committee Terms of Reference*