

The Baltimore Museum of Art Archives Records Access Policy (Approved by the BMA Board of Trustees, 9/17/2013)

Overview

The Baltimore Museum of Art (the “Museum” or the “BMA”) Archives collects and keeps the permanent records of the BMA and other documents pertinent to its history, collections, and programs. These holdings are essential for institutional continuity and accountability, and are an important source of evidence for scholars interested in BMA and its activities.

The Museum is committed to creating an environment that inspires creativity, encourages learning, and fosters human understanding in a place where everyone feels welcome. The BMA strives to provide all users of the Archives with equitable service and access to the holdings. The Archives determines appropriate restrictions for sensitive and confidential materials using legal guidelines; established museum practices; and The Society of American Archivists’ Code of Ethics, as well as its Standards for Access to Research Materials in Archival and Manuscripts Repositories. Access to some records may be restricted due to applicable laws, statutes, personal privacy rights, institutional proprietary rights, or through agreement between the Archives and transferring offices and/or donors of archival material. Records in the Archives are opened to researchers as soon as possible.

This policy applies to manuscripts and institutional records held by the Archives. Active Object, Donor, and Employee Files, as well as other records retained by individual Museum departments, are subject to the holding department’s rules for access.

A glossary of terms is attached to provide clarity for users.

General Access Policy

- The current Board Chair and BMA Director have the authority to inspect all records, except for materials sealed by donors of archival material.
- The BMA Head Librarian and Archivist may restrict access to any records held by the BMA.

Open Records

- All records intended for public circulation or approved for public release are open for research.
- Once a record is open, it will remain open permanently.
- Donors of archival material may waive prior negotiated restrictions at any time.

Restrictions and Closed Records

- All records are closed to outside researchers for 25 years from date of creation unless otherwise indicated in the Access Policy.
 - Curatorial Exhibition records are open upon completion of the project or the departure of the staff member responsible for it.
 - Individual donor files containing personal or financial information are closed to outside researchers for 25 years from the death of the donor.
- Closed records may be inspected only by the current Board Chair, the BMA Director, the director of the originating department or division, or their staff or Board designees.

- Unprocessed records may be closed to outside researchers at the discretion of the BMA Archivist. These records are available to staff members to use in the course of their research for the Museum.
- The following records are permanently closed:
 - records containing personal information (including salary information, Social Security numbers, grievances, home contact information, family information, medical information, financial information, or any information related to character, general reputation, personal characteristics, or mode of living)
 - records that compromise security or operations
 - legal communications
 - legal work product
 - other materials at the discretion of the Archivist of the BMA Director

Copyright and Permissions

- The Museum makes no representation that it is the owner of any copyright or other literary property in Archives materials. The researcher is responsible in determining the nature of any rights and the ownership or interest therein and must independently obtain permission to publish or use, as applicable.
- Researchers agree to indemnify and hold harmless BMA and its affiliates from and against all claims and actions related to intellectual property infringement or violations of rights or otherwise related to the researcher's use of the Archives.

Visiting the Archives

- All research visits must be scheduled in advance.
- The Archives is open by appointment, Monday through Friday, between 9am and 5pm.
- Members of the media must contact the BMA's Communications Department for access to the Archives: (443) 573-1870.
- All material in the Archives must be handled with the utmost care. Improper handling and/or damage of archival material may result in the suspension of research privileges.
- Any photocopies or reproductions of documents or publication of materials from the Archives must be approved by the BMA.

GLOSSARY

Definitions are drawn from *The Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology* by Richard Pearce-Moses (2012).

Access policy, n. ~ Principles or procedures that control the conditions under which individuals have permission and ability to consult a repository's holdings.

Archival records, n. ~ Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs that are preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator. Notes: 'Archival records' connotes documents rather than artifacts or published materials, although collections of archival records may contain artifacts and books. Archival records may be in any format, including text on paper or in electronic formats, photographs, motion pictures, videos, sound recordings.

Archives (also archive), n. ~ 1. Materials created or received by a person, family, or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in the information they contain or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, original order, and collective control; permanent records. – 2. The division within an organization responsible for maintaining the organization's records of enduring value. – 3. An organization that collects the records of individuals, families, or other organizations; a collecting archives. – 4. The professional discipline of administering such collections and organizations. – 5. The building (or portion thereof) housing archival collections. – 6. A published collection of scholarly papers, especially as a periodical.

Closed, adj. ~ 1. Restricted access; unavailable.

Open, adj. ~ 1. Available and accessible; without restrictions; not closed.

Record, n. ~ 1. A written or printed work of a legal or official nature that may be used as evidence or proof; a document. - 2. Data or information that has been fixed on some medium; that has content, context, and structure; and that is used as an extension of human memory or to demonstrate accountability. - 3. Data or information in a fixed form that is created or received in the course of individual or institutional activity and set aside (preserved) as evidence of that activity for future reference.

Processing, n. ~ 1. The arrangement, description, and housing of archival materials for storage and use by patrons.

Restriction, n. ~ Limitations on an individual access to or use of materials. Notes: Access restrictions may be defined by a period of time or by a class of individual allowed or denied access. They may be designed to protect national security, personal privacy, or to preserve materials. Use restrictions may limit what can be done with materials, or they may place qualifications on use. For example, an individual may be allowed access to materials but may not have permission or right to copy, quote, or publish those materials, or conditions may be imposed on such use. In addition to legal use restrictions, such as privacy and copyright, donor agreements often contain use restrictions.