



INSTITUTIONAL CODE OF ETHICS

Approved by the Neon Museum Board of Trustees November 16, 2018



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Neon Museum Overview

The Neon Museum was founded in 1996 as a partnership between the Allied Arts Council of Southern Nevada and the City of Las Vegas. The Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the mission of collecting, preserving, studying and exhibiting iconic Las Vegas signs for educational, historic, arts and cultural enrichment. Dedicated individuals from the private sector, as well as corporate and government entities, worked collaboratively to promote the preservation of these national treasures as significant pieces of artistic and historical importance. Each of the more than 600 signs in the Neon Museum's collection offers a unique story about the personalities who created it, what inspired it, where and when it was made, and the role it played in Las Vegas' distinctive history. In addition, the Neon Museum collection chronicles changes and trends in sign design and technology through pieces ranging from the 1930s to the present day.

Since its inception, funding for the Neon Museum has been provided through both private and public sources. Private funding includes revenue generated by ticket sales for tours of the Neon Boneyard and Brilliant!; for fees from personal, commercial and retail photo shoots; and from membership sales. Donations from individuals, businesses and from corporate foundations have also been significant to the museum's ongoing preservation efforts.

Public funding sources include grants from the Nevada Commission on Cultural Affairs, the Las Vegas Centennial Commission, the Nevada Legislature, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors' Authority and a grant to the City of Las Vegas from the National Scenic Byways program for the La Concha Visitor Center build-out. The City also received Federal Southern Nevada Public Land Management funds to add a park and parking lot as part of the Museum's overall campus. The City of Las Vegas remains supportive of the Neon Museum and its efforts as evidenced in its commitment to leasing the Museum campus land for 50 years at \$1 per year. The City also continues to work with the Museum in its development and implementation of the Scenic Byways/Las Vegas Boulevard signs project, which restores and relocates signs from the Neon Museum collection onto Las Vegas Boulevard in downtown.

The approximately three-acre Neon Museum campus includes the outdoor exhibition space known as the Neon Boneyard, the North Gallery, South (Boulevard) Gallery, Neon Boneyard Park, and a visitors' center housed inside the former La Concha Motel lobby. Nine signs from the museum are also installed as public art throughout downtown Las Vegas. Programming and engagement initiatives consist of lectures, panel discussions, national artist residency, and a full calendar of educational and arts programming.



Public education outreach, research, archival preservation and a grant-funded neon sign survey represent a selection of the museum's previous and ongoing projects. Committed to growing its archive for and about Las Vegas signage, the Neon Museum launched an oral history project in 2014 and continues to strive for scholarly excellence through collecting interviews, documents, and internal and external research.

In keeping with the Museum's Core Values of Integrity, Team Work, Collaboration, Stewardship, Innovation, Creativity, and Originality, employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees, and others associated with the Museum understand and recognize that individual and collective integrity, the absence of conflicts of interest, adherence to policies and procedures, providing mission-aligned educational programming, generating community goodwill and support, financial transparency and operating in a manner that establishes public trust and confidence is paramount to the success of the organization.

Guiding Principles

Mission Statement

The Neon Museum collects, preserves, studies and exhibits iconic Las Vegas signs for educational, historic, arts and cultural enrichment.

Vision Statement

To bring history and the arts to the forefront of the Las Vegas experience.

Core Values

Integrity, Teamwork, Collaboration, Stewardship, Innovation, Creativity, and Originality

The Neon Museum operates as a nonprofit entity serving the public through educational outreach, community alliances, collecting, preserving, sharing and interpreting history. The Museum is fully aware of its role as the steward of the signage of the Las Vegas area and is committed to holding the collection in public trust so that the local, national and international community can better understand the evolution of Las Vegas as it relates to its signs.

As a nonprofit institution, the Neon Museum complies with applicable local, state, and federal laws and international conventions. The Museum, and those responsible for its operation and well-being, must do more than simply avoid legal liability, but must also take affirmative steps to maintain institutional integrity and ensure that individuals act legally and ethically. With the adoption of this Code of Ethics, the Neon Museum affirms its mission and values, ensures the prudent application of its resources and maintains public confidence. The Neon Museum has enacted this Code of Ethics in recognition of its role as a community leader and steward of the public trust.



Governance and Operating Principles

The Neon Museum's Code of Ethics applies to the employees, volunteers, and Board of Trustees.

Individual Integrity

Individuals associated with the Museum are expected to conduct themselves with the highest standards of professionalism and integrity and actively demonstrate honesty, accountability, and a strong sense of duty and loyalty to the organization. The Institutional Code of Ethics is designed to provide the guiding principles in decision making that is in the best interest of the Museum, promote goodwill in the community and earn the trust and confidence of the public. Museum policies and procedures provide further guidance and direction in these areas.

Collective Stewardship and Transparency

The Neon Museum is responsible for offering historic preservation and educational services to serve the public good. The employees, volunteers, and Board of Trustees is committed to the ethical management of Museum resources and assets. The assets of the organization may not be used to benefit any party without the reasonable expectation of equal or greater benefit to the organization. No action should be taken which would jeopardize the nonprofit status of the organization.

Historic Preservation

The Neon Museum Visitors' Center is housed in the former La Concha Motel lobby, which is listed on the State Register of Historic Places. As caretakers of this historic building, the Museum will ensure that the lobby is cared for according to museum standards. All changes to the property will be coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Office.

Education and Engagement

The Neon Museum is responsible for serving its community through educational engagement. The Museum is committed to developing and executing programming that reach multiple audiences and allow the public to expand their knowledge of the artistry, technology, and rich history of signage in Las Vegas.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees provide oversight and leadership. The daily activities and operations of the Museum are delegated to the President & CEO. The Trustees serve a maximum of three, three year terms and are required to actively participate at regularly scheduled board meetings and committees. Trustees are volunteers and are prohibited from accepting any form of compensation for their service on the Board nor may they leverage their position for personal gain. Any actual or perceived conflict of interest is strictly prohibited. Trustees are expected to demonstrate a duty of loyalty and due care toward the Museum.



President & CEO

The President & CEO acts on behalf of the Board to ensure that Museum staff members are acting appropriately and with the highest professional standards. The President & CEO will consult with the Collections Manager and Collections Committee to approve the purchase or acceptance of loans or gifts within the parameters approved by the Board.

The President & CEO is also responsible for carrying out the strategic direction of the Museum, the management and daily operations of the organization. The President & CEO is the public face of the Museum. The role of President & CEO requires ethical behavior, open and honest communication, financial transparency and actions that demonstrate a duty of care and loyalty on behalf of the organization.

Development

The Neon Museum adopts the principles and practices endorsed by the Association of Fundraising Professionals which foster the enhancement of philanthropy and volunteerism. The Museum recognizes that it acts within the public trust and will be transparent in all of its fundraising activities. Museum staff will ensure that donors receive informed, accurate, and ethical advice about the value and tax implications of contributions and also that contributions are used in accordance with the donor's intentions. Museum employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees will not disclose privileged or confidential information to unauthorized parties.

Specific standards are detailed in the **Neon Museum Gift Policy**.

Human Resources

The Neon Museum is committed to fostering a workplace culture that is inclusive, safe, creative, fun and team based. All staff members have a responsibility to preserve and protect the signs in the museum collection whenever their duties bring them in contact with the collection and collection records.

Management is responsible for the day to day supervision of staff and volunteers and to ensure transparency in establishing performance expectations, goal setting and communications. Managers are encouraged to hold regular staff meetings and provide opportunities for professional and personal growth and development.

The employee handbook as well as other Museum policies and procedures provide additional guidance to employees and managers for acceptable behavior and performance. Human resources support is readily available. An employee hotline number may be utilized by employees to report any workplace concern, including ethical or legal breaches. The company, Prism Global Management Group, can be contacted at www.prismgmg.com or 1-877-344-5004.



Public Relations & Marketing

The Neon Museum PR and Marketing team is a responsible advocate for the Museum to provide a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts and viewpoints to aid informed public debate. It adheres to the highest standards of accuracy and truth in advancing the interests of the Museum and in communicating with the public. The team acquires and responsibly uses specialized knowledge and experience to build mutual understanding, credibility and relationships among a wide array of institutions and audiences. It deals fairly with clients, employers, competitors, peers, vendors, the media, and the general public.

Social Media

The Neon Museum is part of a robust online community with which it interacts on a daily basis. It is essential that employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees engage in civil interaction that fosters trust within that community. The PR and Marketing Department is the sole entity responsible for posting as the Neon Museum on social media; Trustees, employees, and volunteers are encouraged to share and comment on posts in a way that positively reflects our museum's core values. The Neon Museum is committed to respecting the intellectual rights of others and will not post anything that is not the Museum's property without proper attribution.

Conflict of Interest

Trustees shall conduct all activities, including those relating to persons or organizations of close association, in such a manner that no conflict, or the appearance of conflict, will arise between those interests and the policies, operations, and interests of the Neon Museum. Whenever a matter arises for action by the Board of Trustees involving conflict between the interests of the Museum and an outside or personal interest of a Trustee, or that of an associate or member of the Trustee's family, that interest shall be disclosed and made a matter of record. In such cases where the Trustee is present when a vote is taken in connection with a matter of potential conflict of interest, the Trustee shall disclose the interest and abstain from voting on the issue.

Employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees shall not compete nor appear to compete with the Museum for objects that are appropriate for the collection, of priority need, and/or of rare availability. While the acquisition and owning of objects of the type collected by the Museum is not in itself unethical, should a conflict develop between the collecting concerns of trustee, staff, or volunteer and the needs of the Museum, those of the Museum must prevail. Objects acquired by trustee, staff, or volunteer through bequest or gift are exempt from the Museum's right to acquire.

The Neon Museum may use outside appraisals for insurance of acquisition purposes. An inherent conflict of interest exists if the Museum or trustee, staff, or volunteer provide estimates to donors or potential donors of an artifact's potential monetary value. Therefore, no trustee, staff, or volunteer will give appraisals for the purpose of establishing fair-market value.

Employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees with potential conflict of interest concerns shall file a statement disclosing business, organizational, and family conflicts, or other circumstances and facts that may give rise to a conflict of interest. This statement shall be filed with the President & CEO for review and consideration. Employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees and their immediate families shall not



acquire any object deaccessioned from the Museum's permanent collection to ensure that no taint of self-interest or inside information clouds the deaccessioning process. Employees, volunteers, Board of Trustees, and their immediate family members shall not use collections, or other items owned by the Museum, for their own personal benefit.

Trustees will sign a conflict of interest agreement before joining the Board.

Collections

Scope of Collections Statement

The Neon Museum's primary emphasis for collecting shall be historically and artistically significant neon signs particularly from Southern Nevada and Las Vegas. The Museum regards neon signs as significant cultural artifacts and works of art, which reflect the unique cultural and economic development of Nevada in addition to the innovative, complex and aesthetic attributes of neon signs as an artistic medium. While the primary focus of the collection is the neon sign, the Museum recognizes that a comprehensive history of significant Southern Nevada signage may require the inclusion of signs that do not have neon or may be purely sculptural in nature. As such, a sign does not necessarily have to include neon nor does it need to be electric or electrified to be considered for inclusion. The Neon Museum recognizes that signs can and should be displayed out of doors, which is their natural artistic environment. Signs can and should receive treatments to maintain or improve their current condition. The Neon Museum accepts signs in all stages of working condition, and reserves the right to restore or conserve the signs to historically accurate conditions for educational purposes.

The Museum accepts items and artifacts that support signs in the collection as well as noteworthy signs in the community. These items might provide context for the sign or the time period, an example the sign's design as used for branding or other commercially related materials, historical documents or renderings including conceptual renderings, historical documentation of some kind whether written or pictorial, or any other objects deemed of merit in support of the mission. These objects may be kept as part of a collection to supplement the sign materials that are the primary focus.

The Neon Museum also collects fine art pieces relating to the collection, and well as an education collection for hands on activities and teaching. The fine art collection consists not only of art pieces that incorporate neon or lighting elements, but also consist of any fine art related the collection, in any medium.

A **Collections Management Policy** has been developed consistent with the best practices in the museum field. The policy covers collection approach, roles and responsibilities, acquiring, loaning, maintaining and deaccessioning items. All employees, volunteers, and Board of Trustees must follow the terms set forth in the policy in order to ensure the safety of the collection.

Acquisition

All potential sign acquisitions are reviewed by the Collections Manager and the Collection Committee made up of members of the Neon Museum Board of Trustees and key Neon Museum staff at the recommendation of the Collections Manager. The Collections Manager is responsible for accepting into the collection non-sign artifacts or objects in support of the collection or mission. Signs and artifacts are



evaluated based on a variety of qualities including but not limited to significance of the site where the sign was located, sign designer, sign fabricator, date of fabrication, quality or uniqueness of design, place of sign within the history of sign design. By extension, these same qualities are considered when reviewing artifacts that relate to a sign in the collection, a significant Las Vegas sign or Las Vegas history are considered.

In most cases, all costs associated with the removal, transport and installation of any signs or objects approved for acquisition into the Neon Museum are covered by the donating entity. However, if the donor is not able to pay for transportation and the Collections Committee has deemed the sign significant and an appropriate addition to the collection, the Museum may provide funding for transportation. The Neon Museum is a 501(c)3 nonprofit entity, and as such the costs incurred by the donor, as well as the value of the object, are eligible for tax deduction to the extent allowed by law. The individual or entity donating a sign or other artifact or object must be in legal ownership of the object and have full permission to transfer ownership.

Due to the nature of the collection and cost associated with large commercial signage, the Neon Museum does not have an acquisition fund set aside for purchasing new collection pieces. All of the signs since the opening of the Neon Museum campus in 2012 have been donated. In the future, if our CFO deems it necessary to establish an acquisition fund, one will be established to allow the museum to purchase signs that cannot be obtained through donation.

Loans

Incoming loans are accepted for specified purposes only. The Neon Museum does not require a minimum loan period, and the loan period being determined on a case by case basis. After the initial loan period, the lender may request the object back. The lender must provide no less than 90 days written warning of object removal. Signing authority for all incoming loan agreements resides with the Collections Manager, acting on recommendation of the Collections Committee. The Museum maintains complete records of all loans and tracks loan activity. If the loan agreement reached contains terms that conflict with those laid out by this plan, or involves an exchange of money, the CFO and the Collections Committee must sign off on the terms.

Items on loan to the Neon Museum will be assigned a Loan ID and cataloged in a separate PastPerfect logbook. Items on loan are not considered a part of the permanent museum collection and will not be accessioned as such. Should loaned items ever be purchased or donated, the objects will be transferred as a new accession. The Museum will not perform or allow any repair, alterations, or conservation treatment on any loaned item without the lender's prior and specific written permission. The Neon Museum will strive to review long-term and permanent loans and convert them to gifts or purchases.

If a loaned item is left at the Museum for over ten years without contact from the lender, and after making due effort to get in touch with the lender or the heirs, the Museum will consider the item abandoned. Abandoned objects may be claimed and accessioned or disposed of at the discretion of the Board.



Deaccession and Disposal

An object in the permanent collection may be considered for deaccession if outside the Scope of Collection Statement, therefore making it irrelevant to the purposes of the Museum. Deaccession may also be considered for items that the Museum feels it is unable to preserve properly, is a duplicated item, or an item that has its authenticity proved fraudulent. The Collections Manager is responsible for nominating artifacts for deaccession and completing the appropriate associated paperwork.

Objects being considered for deaccession will be presented to the Board. A majority vote is needed and the signatures of the Board Chair, Committee Chair, CEO and Collections Manager are needed on all deaccession paperwork. All paperwork associated with the object will continue to be maintained in the accession records for reference.

Deaccessioned objects will be disposed of by one of the following, unless there are provisions for disposition specified in the deed of gift.

1. Items will be offered to other programs at The Neon Museum for use (i.e. an educational collection).
2. Items will be offered to other educational institutions, museums, and nonprofit organizations.
3. Items will be offered for sale with a reputable dealer. Proceeds will go to the direct care of the collection.
4. Items will undergo destruction and disposal.

The Museum does not sanction the sale or gift of deaccessioned items to employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees, or to their families and representatives. Items in the permanent collection shall not be deaccessioned in order to provide financial support to other museum operations and facilities. Proceeds from deaccession activities must be used for the direct care of museum collection objects.

In the event that the Museum is unable to care for items in its collection, provide appropriate public access, or if the institution dissolves items will be offered to other educational intuitions, museums, and nonprofit organizations of similar mission.

Collections Care and Handling

Access

Staff access: All staff have access to artifacts that are displayed in the Neon Boneyard. The North Gallery, Boulevard (South) Gallery, and Ne10 Studio are accessible with supervisor approval.

Public access: The public will have access to the Neon Boneyard, the North Gallery, and Ne10 Studio only while accompanied by authorized staff. Members of the public must stay within viewing distance of the accompanying staff. Staff must take responsibility for advising the public of exhibit area rules and restrictions.

Only approved staff will have access to any storage areas. Any other visitors or staff must have the direct supervision of the Collections Manager while accessing these areas. Objects that have not been



accessioned, such as items in temporary custody, may be stored in a designated storage space. If the room is opened for another person, s/he must be supervised by one of the approved staff at all times. Museum collection storage facilities are not public areas. For the preservation and security of the collections, access is extremely limited.

Handling Guidelines

Sign collections should be handled by trained professionals using protective work gloves. A qualified sign company or equivalent must be used in moving any sign that cannot be moved by an individual. Supplemental collection items should be treated with care and kept in protective polyethylene sleeves or handled with protective nitrile or cotton gloves as determined by the Collections Manager. Any moving or handling of signs or related artifacts should be recorded in the accession file.

Environmental Monitoring/Integrated Pest Management

Due to the nature of the outdoor environment of the Neon Museum's exhibited space, traditional industry standards for the museum environment will not be pursued. Temperature, light humidity, and dust abrasion may be mitigated when appropriate techniques arise but may not be controlled at the expense of the exhibit's integrity. Since the Museum cannot control the environmental factors of outdoor spaces, it will seek to monitor the effects of light, humidity, temperature and dust with conservation and restoration efforts.

Collection materials kept in storage however may be monitored and environmental controls will be set to the level appropriate for the stored materials.

Assigned staff should regularly monitor the exhibits and artifacts for insect, rodent, bird and other pest related damage. Should damage be found, items in question will undergo review for mitigation techniques. Any item that shows current damage should be checked on a monthly basis for continued damage.

Mitigation should be determined by the Collections Manager on a case by case basis as evidence of damage is found. The Neon Museum will take steps to eliminate pests without harming local wildlife.

Conservation and Restoration

The Collections Manager will investigate conservation and/or stabilization treatments of a broad variety based on material type and both museum and sign industry standards. Treatments are intended to prevent deterioration of signs, including but not limited to rust abatement, painting, bracing, etc. The Collections Manager will determine the scope of treatment, and the CEO, CFO, and the Collections Committee will approve the funding and prioritization of treatments, with funds drawn from the Collections budget. Conservation treatments will only be implemented by trained staff or professionals in the method being implemented. Conservation methods will only be used on items in the permanent collections. Loaned objects will only be considered for conservation with express written permission from the owner. Any interventions to the permanent collection must be fully documented.

In select cases, the Neon Museum will restore signs to reflect their original working and displayed conditions, with budgeted sign restoration funds, or grant funds if available. This will only be undertaken



with signs within the permanently owned collections that have enough accurate information and evidence of original working conditions, paint colors and any other physical and mechanical components. All restoration plans and documentation must be detailed by the Collections Manager and submitted to the CEO and CFO for approval prior to work beginning. The CEO and CFO must also approve the final budget of the restoration.

For restoration of a sign by the Neon Museum directly, an estimate from a sign company with expertise and experience in sign restoration must be chosen and approved by the CEO and CFO.

Signs restored for the Las Vegas Boulevard/Scenic Byways sign restoration project are subject to City of Las Vegas construction bidding process and any parameters as outlined by grant monies used for restoration (i.e., limitations on use of Federal funds, etc.).

Exhibits, Events, and Educational Programming

To further its mission and better educate the public on the historical significance and appreciation of neon signs, the Museum frequently hosts educational programs and exhibitions in cooperation with community partners. Programs and events will be closely monitored to ensure that the integrity of the Museum, the signs, and mission of the Museum are not compromised.

Individuals and organizations that partner with the Neon Museum are held to high standards of integrity and adherence to the Museum's institutional code of ethics. The Museum retains control and assumes all responsibility for program content.

Implementation

It will be the obligation of the Neon Museum's staff and Board of Trustees to implement the guidelines set forth in the Code of Ethics. The principles outlined in this document address issues that pertain to the activities of employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees. This document is a guide to ethical conduct to ensure the Neon Museum's accountability to the public. This document will be periodically edited and updated, if necessary, by Museum staff with approval of the Board of Trustees.

All employees, volunteers, or Board of Trustees will be required to read and sign this document affirming that they agree to abide by the guidelines set forth within.

Sources

Code of Ethics and Guide for Professional Practices, Roswell Museum and Art Center, 2007
Institutional Code of Ethics, The Mob Museum, 2014



Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read the Neon Museum's Code of Ethics and I agree to abide by the standards set forth in this document.

Name (please print)

Signature

Date