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Rethinking Stewardship Symposium: Ethics and Creative Problem Solving in Museum Deaccessioning

OCTOBER 8, 2026 - 2:00 PM TO 4:30 PM

ACKERMAN HALL, MICHAEL C. CARLOS MUSEUM

Organized by the Michael C. Carlos Museum and Emory University's Center for Ethics, this symposium brings together professionals, artists, donors and the public to consider how museums can evolve responsibly while remaining true to their missions and communities. It will explore the policies and issues related to deaccessioning, as well as look at real life examples of how practice is evolving in the museum field today.

Symposium participants include:

Jill Deupi, Lowe Art Museum at the University of Miami;

Masha Turchinsky, Hudson River Museum;

Amy Lewis Hofland, Crow Museum, University of Dallas;

Adam Levine, Toledo Museum of Art;

Elizabeth Peterson-Jennings, Oglethorpe University Museum of Art;

Danille Taylor, Clark Atlanta University Art Museum;

Rod Bigelow, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art;

Henry Kim and **Todd Lamkin**, Michael C. Carlos Museum, Emory University;

John Lysaker, Director, Emory Center for Ethics.

The ethics of deaccessioning objects from art museum collections has gained increasing urgency as museums confront tight finances, burgeoning collections, changing collecting priorities and evolving institutional missions that extend beyond collection-centered stewardship to broader community engagement.

Should museums be permitted to deaccession objects? What purpose does deaccessioning serve, and does it strengthen or undermine the long-term value of museums? Should proceeds from the sale of deaccessioned objects be allowed to fund new buildings, support staff or acquire new works? When donor intent conflicts with an institution's most pressing needs, which should take precedence? How does deaccessioning objects impact the reputations of living artists?

This program is free and open to the public.

Generously supported by the
Brian Shields Fund for Institutional Ethics

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