

Request For Proposals

McIntosh Gallery

External Collection Review

Purpose and Scope

McIntosh Gallery is requesting proposals from qualified, experienced curators, academics, consultants, and arts professionals for the research and writing of an External Collection Review and Report focused on the McIntosh Gallery Collection.

The External Collection Review will complement the ongoing Internal Collection Review by adding additional layers of expertise, perspectives, and research to support the creation of an updated Collection Policy and a new Collection Development Plan. These documents will inform collecting priorities over the next five (5) years and beyond at McIntosh Gallery.

The intention of the review and the resulting Collection Development Plan is to reframe McIntosh Gallery's approach to collecting. To position the collection, as Jennifer Durrant has articulated, "as the beating heart of museums, with acquisition and disposal as the act of breathing; inhaling life through new acquisitions and breathing out those aspects that are no longer needed, and which will cause harm if they are allowed to remain" (Durrant 2025, 5). From this view, accession and deaccession are equally critical to maintaining sustainable collections. While the gallery as an institution persists through time, the collection is always changing - has always been changing in response to shifting institutional mandates and the changing needs of the communities that it serves. Efforts to preserve every object indefinitely out of fear of what might be lost through deaccession prioritizes the loss of what cannot be acquired due to institutional capacity limitations. Given finite institutional resources, deaccessioning is required to build a collection that remains relevant, responsive, and sustainable.

The result of the external review will be a comprehensive report on the collection. It will include, but may not be limited to:

- Collection Review approach and methodology
- Challenges experienced during the Collection Review and how they were navigated
- Key Findings:
 - Overarching relevance of the collection
 - Areas of strength
 - Areas of weakness
 - Recommendations and priorities for areas of future development
 - Recommendations and priorities for deaccession or refinement pending further research and significance assessment

Project Background

McIntosh Gallery collects contemporary and historical Canadian art connected to Southwestern Ontario that advances Western University's academics, research, and student experience. The Gallery also collects art by Canadian artists that provides context for the collection's regional holdings.



Beginning with the inaugural collection donated by Wilhelmina McIntosh in 1940, the McIntosh Gallery Collection has grown to more than 4,350 objects. Between 1990 and 2018, 73% of the collection was acquired. Following this period of significant growth, collecting activity slowed around 2019. This moment highlighted known issues of representation and diversity in the collection, as well as the physical challenges of building a collection in a static, overfull collection vault with public access limitations. McIntosh Gallery also has a long history of deaccessioning to refine the collection and support its continued growth, with significant examples in 1980, 2002, and 2021. A total of 365 artworks, or about 7.7% of the collection, have been deaccessioned throughout the gallery's history.

Many overlapping realities have required McIntosh Gallery to reflect on its history of collecting and develop a plan for the collection's future that accounts for continued growth, increased representation, and greater public accessibility to support research, teaching, and interdisciplinary knowledge creation across the University. McIntosh Gallery's physical storage capacity will be increased as part of the construction of a new gallery, anticipated for 2029. While this new space will support the growth of and access to the collection, a Collection Development Plan is equally critical to the ongoing sustainability of the collection and its capacity to develop in alignment with the many communities the gallery serves and developing regional art practices.

Available Resources and Opportunities:

The selected consultant or consulting group will have access to the following resources and opportunities to conduct the work:

- Online collection database (PastPerfect) and excel exports (available remotely - full access to PastPerfect is available on-site)
- PastPerfect search reporting statistics (available remotely)
- Available photographic documentation of the collection (available remotely)
- Hard-copy collection files and exhibition files/catalogues (available on-site or scanned by request for remote access)
- Current Collection Policy and a summary of anticipated future directions (available remotely)
- Materials related to McIntosh Gallery's current and historical operations, including McIntosh Gallery's 2025 Strategic Plan, catalogues, essays, and other internal materials (available remotely and in hard copy)
- Staff support to navigate resources and provide additional context (available remotely)
- Opportunities to view artworks on campus or in the vault (available on-site)
- Other resources as requested.

Schedule:

Anticipated start date: July 20, 2026

Anticipated end date: April 2027 (with flexibility in cases where timeline impacts project feasibility).

Budget:

The maximum budget for this project should not exceed \$20,000 CDN, excluding HST.

Proposal Guidelines:

Proposals must include all listed information. Incomplete proposals will not be considered. Final proposals should be no more than ten (10) pages, excluding Project Team CVs.

1. Applicant Information
 - i. Applicant name and consulting firm (if applicable)
 - ii. Mailing address
 - iii. Telephone number
 - iv. Email address
 - v. Duplicate information for all relevant partners
2. Conflicts of Interest

Applicants are required to state any perceived or actual conflicts of interest that they have with McIntosh Gallery, staff, or Western University.
3. Applicant Description

Describe the consultant/consulting group, including areas of expertise, length of time working in the field/being in operation, and staff involved. If the proposal includes a partnership, similar information should be provided for the partner(s).
4. Previous Experience

Describe the applicant's relevant experience that makes them well-suited for this project. Include examples of experience working with art museum collections. If the proposal includes a partnership, similar information should be provided for the partner(s).
5. Project Description and Methodology

Describe how the project will be undertaken and the unique and innovative components that this proposal incorporates. Be explicit in describing the methodology you will use to identify the collection's strengths and weaknesses and to develop recommendations for the future. Note why these methods are best suited to this project.
6. Project Team:

Individuals or project teams are welcome to apply.

 - i. List all members of the project team. Include their name, location, role in the project, and the relevant skills and expertise they will contribute.
 - ii. Include a CV of each team member.
7. Project Workplan

Assuming a project start date of July 20, 2026, provide a work schedule that clearly indicates the time required to complete the project and any critical dates within the process.
8. Proposed Budget

Provide a schedule of all costs associated with the project, including hourly rates/per diem of all individuals involved, disbursements including travel, communications, printing and overhead. All prices should clearly indicate relevant HST. Applicants must also provide an upset limit, which will be a maximum amount which will be billed in the performance of the work involved in the RFP.

Questions about the RFP can be sent to McIntosh Gallery Curator (Collections & Special Projects), Rachel Deiterding, rdeiterd@uwo.ca, until June 14 at 11:59 pm EST. Responses will be provided by June 16 at 2:30 pm EST. Questions received after the deadline will not be responded to.

Proposals will be accepted until June 17, 11:59 pm EST. All proposals received after this date and time will not be considered. All proposals must be submitted by email to the Curator (Collections & Special Projects) with the subject line “McIntosh Gallery External Collection Review”.

Short-listed applicants may be invited for an interview. Interviews are anticipated for the week of June 22.

Submission Deadline:

Submissions must be received by email in a single PDF document by June 17 at 11:59 pm

Submit via email with the subject line “McIntosh Gallery External Collection Review” to: Rachel Deiterding, Curator (Collections & Special Projects), rdeiterd@uwo.ca.

Qualifications:

The applicants should have the following proven skills, abilities and experience:

- Five (5) years of experience working with collections focused on contemporary and historical Canadian art. Knowledge of regional artistic practices in Southwestern Ontario will be prioritized.
- Experience with collection development will be prioritized
- Research, critical analysis, and synthesizing skills
- Experience with report writing and editing
- Communication and listening skills
- Experience with anti-oppression, anti-racist, and decolonial work
- Ability to deliver the elements outlined in the project description

Selection Criteria:

All proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Background and professional qualifications	15
Demonstrated relevant experience and success with similar projects	15
Methodology	20
Creative and visionary thinking	5
Demonstrated understanding of collections management and McIntosh Gallery's needs	10
Demonstrated strong communication skills	5
Project team	10
Schedule and project planning	10
Value and cost	10
TOTAL	100

It is the intent that these criteria be used in evaluating the proposals received; however, McIntosh Gallery or its assigned agent(s) shall be the sole judge as to the evaluation of the proposals received. No correspondence shall be entered into regarding the evaluation of any proposal or its comparison to



other proposals received. McIntosh Gallery also reserves the right to alter or adjust the selection criteria should it be deemed necessary. McIntosh Gallery is not bound to select the applicant with the highest evaluation.

Before final selections are made, short-listed applicants may be required to complete an interview and deliver a short presentation that highlights their proposal.

Acceptance and Award of Contract:

McIntosh Gallery reserves the right to accept any proposal in whole or in part thereof judged most satisfactory, without liability on the part of McIntosh Gallery or Western University.

McIntosh Gallery reserves the right to reject any or all proposals. The lowest-priced proposal will not necessarily be awarded a contract.

McIntosh Gallery reserves the right to enter into negotiations with the highest scoring applicant using the selection criteria. McIntosh Gallery further reserves the right to negotiate with any other applicant should negotiations with the highest scoring applicant not result in a satisfactory agreement.

Budgets and Payment:

McIntosh Gallery has a strictly defined budget for the External Collection Review and reserves the right to change the scope of the project to bring the proposal price within the available budget limits. Should it be determined that the changes in the scope of the project are of sufficient magnitude, then McIntosh Gallery shall cancel the proposal call. Then, at its discretion, McIntosh Gallery will commence a new process in order to complete the project within the budget available.

Changes to the scope of this project, either by changes in scheduling, changes in quantities and/or deletion of any part of the project requirements, shall not entitle the selected applicant to any extra compensation.

A fee schedule will be negotiated with the selected applicant and defined in the project agreement. McIntosh Gallery shall pay 100% of the agreed-upon amount within 30 days of the receipt of an invoice.

Right to Amend Requirements:

Upon awarding the contract, based on the information submitted in proposals received, McIntosh Gallery reserves the right to work with the successful applicant to modify any of the proposal components outlined in the RFP that are agreeable to all parties. In the event that the chosen applicant fails to act in good faith by refusing to negotiate, or fails to fulfill the intent of the RFP, or to execute any negotiated agreement within five business days of the award, the candidate will be considered to have abandoned all rights and interest in the contract award and the award may be cancelled without penalty. The award may then be made to the next highest-ranked candidate, or all proposals may be rejected at the sole discretion of McIntosh Gallery.

Limitation of Liability

McIntosh Gallery enforces a strict code of ethics and attempts to always be fair in evaluating and awarding contracts resulting from any bidding process. By submitting a quotation, bidders agree that



McIntosh Gallery will not be held liable for any amount in excess of the amount required to prepare and submit a quotation in the event that McIntosh Gallery is found to have erred in any manner in the award of the contract.

Bibliography:

Durrant, Jennifer. *Deaccessioning Museum Objects: Transparency and Ethics in Disposal Practice*.
Routledge: London & New York, 2025.