

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF MUSEUM COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALIZATION**Khanna Utemuratova**

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Abstract: This article examines current trends, challenges, and prospects for museum collection acquisition in the context of globalization. Particular attention is paid to legal regulation, acquisition ethics, museum interactions with private collectors, and the digitalization of collection activities. It explores promising areas for the development of museum collection acquisition, including the use of digital technologies, the development of international cooperation, and a rethinking of the role of museums as global cultural institutions. International practices (USA, France, Japan) and the possibilities for their adaptation to the museum systems of Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan are analyzed.

Keywords: International practices, museum studies, acquisition, museum collections, globalization, cultural heritage, digitalization, ethics, inventory.

Contemporary museum practice is undergoing significant changes under the influence of globalization processes, which affect not only forms of communication and exhibition activities, but also the very system of collection acquisition—the foundation of the museum as an institution of memory. According to the definition of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), acquisition is "the systematic and scientifically based replenishment of museum collections, aimed at the preservation and study of cultural heritage" [1].

The phrase "acquisition of museum collections" appeared in Russian museology in the late 1940s and for nearly three decades was identified with the term "collecting work." A distinction between these concepts first appeared in the works of N.P. Finyagina and Yu.P. Pishchulin, who defined collection acquisition as a systematic and targeted museum activity aimed at identifying items of museum significance, acquiring them, and systematizing them in collections. Collecting work, meanwhile, came to be understood as an integral part of acquisition—the practical activities of implementing the acquisition program.

Museum collection acquisition is one of the most complex and least understood issues in contemporary museum theory and practice. One of the key challenges today is the imbalance between the volume of incoming objects and the capacity to store, record, and study them. Museums worldwide are faced with the need to rethink their selection principles, moving from a quantitative to a qualitative approach [2]. Globalization is intensifying the exchange of cultural assets and information, which, on the one hand, facilitates the expansion of museum collections, but on the other, gives rise to ethical and legal debates. In particular, questions of provenance, repatriation, and acquisition transparency are becoming pressing.

In the era of globalization, understanding acquisition is becoming significantly more complex. The museum landscape is becoming more interconnected than ever, with institutions worldwide collaborating to share resources, preserve cultural heritage, and expand access to

collections. International partnerships, cross-border exhibitions, and global exchange are becoming the norm. These collaborations strengthen institutional offerings, promote cultural understanding, and ensure collections reach a wider and more diverse audience.

However, managing diverse collections across regions and languages poses unique challenges. Museums face linguistic differences, the need to understand the cultural contexts of objects and their associated meanings, and the challenge of standardizing cataloging practices across countries. Understanding the cultural contexts of objects is crucial, as different cultures may interpret and classify objects differently [3].

Today, although 69% of museums report having a digital strategy, only 23% have partially digitized their collections. In the United States, leading museums—such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Smithsonian Institution—are actively implementing digital inventory standards, increasing acquisition transparency and making collections accessible online [4]. An example is the Open Access project, which provides free access to over 3 million digital images. A different trend is observed in Asia: museums in Japan and South Korea are actively developing digital collection sharing systems. The Tokyo National Museum is implementing the Digital Archive of Japanese Heritage project, which is creating virtual copies of rare exhibits that are not available for physical display [5].

The concept of acquisitions is based on the problem of selection. The primary selection criteria are: compliance with the museum's profile; the presence of the essential properties of a museum object (associativity, attractiveness, informativeness, communicativeness, representativeness, expressiveness); the relationship between material embodiment and semantic content (semantics); and the ability of the object to perform its functions in all areas of museum activity. These characteristics are fully revealed during collection work, but their initial interpretation is also necessary at the selection stage [6]. At the initial stage of work with an object, it is also necessary to determine its material of manufacture in order to determine its suitability for long-term storage in the museum.

One of the most pressing problems of acquisitions in the context of globalization is the question of the ethical origin of objects in museum collections. The 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property was the first international treaty aimed at returning cultural artefacts to the States where they originated.

In 2024, the Fowler Museum at UCLA voluntarily returned seven royal objects to the Asante Kingdom of Ghana, marking the 150th anniversary of the looting of four of these objects during the sack of Kumasi by British colonial forces in 1874. In October 2022, the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African Art transferred ownership of 29 Benin Bronzes to the National Museums and Monuments Commission in Nigeria. Smithsonian Secretary General Lonnie Bunch stated, "Returning ownership of these magnificent artifacts to their rightful home was not only the right decision but also demonstrates how we all benefit when cultural institutions make ethical choices".

At the same time, globalization offers new opportunities for the development of museum acquisitions. Digital technologies enable expanded access to collections, ensure the preservation of cultural heritage information, and create global research platforms. International collaboration facilitates the exchange of experiences, joint exhibitions, and partnership projects. The movement to decolonize museums encourages a rethinking of the role of museum institutions and the development of more equitable and inclusive collection management practices.

Promising areas for the development of museum collections include: developing ethical repatriation policies and establishing partnerships with communities of origin; creating integrated digital platforms for managing global collections; developing the intercultural competencies of museum specialists; integrating sustainable development principles into acquisition practices; and using innovative technologies for documenting and interpreting cultural heritage.

Museums in the 21st century must evolve from institutions focused solely on accumulation and preservation to platforms for cultural dialogue that foster mutual understanding between diverse communities. This requires not only technological and methodological innovations but also a fundamental rethinking of the goals and values of museum acquisitions in a globalizing world.

For museums in Uzbekistan, and Karakalpakstan in particular, the problem of acquisition is of particular importance. Many regional museums—including the I.V. Savitsky State Museum of Art and the State Museum of History and Culture of the Republic of Karakalpakstan—possess unique collections but require updated collection management methods. Issues related to the legal regulation of private transfers, the development of a unified electronic catalog, and the implementation of a national digital collections platform remain pressing [7].

Thus, acquiring museum collections in the era of globalization requires a comprehensive approach that combines legal, ethical, and technological aspects. It is important for museums in Karakalpakstan to leverage international experience, focusing on digitalization, transparency, and the professional training of museum specialists. Globalization opens new opportunities for the exchange of cultural assets, while also requiring museums to adopt a responsible and scientifically sound approach to expanding their collections.

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