

REPORT FORM: USE OF THE FORM IS NOT MANDATORY, but it provides a guide to the type of information recorded in the Inventory. Please feel free to use alternate means of reporting collections, especially when documentation (such as catalogue cards, collection checklists, etc.) exists and can be easily photocopied. When requested, copies of either the painting or sculpture report form will be provided in unlimited quantity at no charge.

Categories of information to be recorded for each work listed in the Inventory include: Artist, Title, Creation Dates, Medium and Support, Dimensions, Markings, Owner, Location, Provenance, and Subject description.

Please type or use a pen and print when filling out a report. Do not feel limited by the spaces provided. You are encouraged to attach additional information such as photographs, newspaper clippings, and articles if available.

INVENTORYING: When examining a work you are less likely to overlook details and items of importance if the examination is carried out in a logical sequence. You may wish to work from top to bottom and/or in a clockwise direction, both for an overall evaluation and for a description of individual details. All observations concerning the work should be made from the point of view of the work itself -- as if you were standing in the painting, or on the sculpture's base, and looking out in the direction it faces. For a portrait, if the sitter holds a book in his/her (your) right hand, "proper right" would be the position of the book. The terms "proper right" and "proper left" should be used when describing figures only.

If you are reporting works first hand, please be safety conscious both for yourself and the work you are examining. A painting's surface should not be touched-- pressure may crack the glaze of paint or varnish; already loose paint may be further detached from the backing; natural oil from the hands will remain on the painting and will show up months later. Never rest anything against a sculpture. Do not attempt to climb on a sculpture or its base to get a better view.

OWNER/ADDRESS: List the specific name and address of the agency, institution, or individual that currently owns or administers the long term control and care of the work. For sculptures, indicate whether the work is located indoors or outdoors.

LOCATION: If the work is actually located elsewhere than at the owner's address, list the work's location with sufficient clarity to enable someone else to easily find the work. It is not necessary to note a temporary absence, such as a short-term loan of the piece to a museum exhibition.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Owners may choose to "restrict" their names and street addresses from appearing in the database of the Inventories. If you would like to select this option, check the appropriate box.

ARTIST: The person who was primarily responsible for the overall conception and creation of the work. Frequently, the artist's name or initials will appear toward the bottom of the work. A painter's name may also appear on a label on the frame of the painting or, less frequently, on a label on the back of the stretcher. A sculptor's name is often followed by an abbreviation for "sculptor" (i.e. SC., Sculpt., S.) and sometimes a date. A sculptor's name may also appear on the base.

An artist's name may be qualified by a question mark (e.g. Thomas Cole?) or by the notation "attrib." (e.g., John Rogers, attrib.). The addition of the question mark denotes the artist identification is doubtful and unsupported. The addition of the abbreviation for "attributed" denotes that question of the artist identification exists, but is supported by documentary evidence and/or expert opinion.

If the work is stylistically a copy after another artist's work, that artist should also be mentioned (e.g., Thomas Cole after Asher B. Durand).

When the identity of an artist is not known or suggested, "Unknown" should be supplied in place of an artist's name.

For sculptures, a piece may often be a collaborative work of several artists. If known, list additional creators and their roles (e.g. carver, architect, etc.) Often the foundry or fabricator's name and city, as well as cast date, appear on the base of the statue. Frequently just a founder's mark or symbol will appear. Enter this information as found. If a symbol is present, attach a hand-drawn copy of the mark. If unknown, leave blank.

TITLE OF WORK: Indicate the complete title of the work as designated by the artist. If unknown, indicate "Unknown."

ALTERNATE TITLES: Record any other titles by which the work is known. These titles might include popular titles or previous titles.

EXECUTION DATE: This is the date that the work was created and is frequently found beside the artist's name. If only an approximate date is known, precede it with the phrase "circa." If unknown, leave blank.

For sculptures, there may be other dates associated with piece, such as the date the piece was commissioned, copyrighted, cast (often found next to the foundry's mark), or the dedicated (often located on the pedestal of the sculpture or on an adjacent plaque). Please be sure to specify the type of date.

MEDIA:

The substance in which the piece is rendered. Please check the appropriate boxes.

For paintings, the Inventory includes works executed in oil, pastel, tempera, watercolor, or gouache. Please indicate whether the painting is on canvas, paper, board, etc.

For sculptures, the Inventory references the media of both the sculpture and the base. List the specific medium, such as bronze, red oak, Vermont marble, if known. If the medium cannot be identified, the term "undetermined" should be checked.

DIMENSIONS:

For paintings, the measurements should be given in inches, with height preceding width. For works on canvas or board, measure from the back, holding the ruler along the outer edge of the wooden stretcher bars or along the edge of the panel. Check if the overall shape is oval or circular; if the work is a mural or a miniature. For watercolors and other works on paper, reference the paper dimensions, not the measurements of the image.

If it is impossible or inadvisable to disturb a painting from its hanging position or to remove the protective glass and paper backing, an approximate measurement of the visible area within the frame or mat-border can be given.

For sculptures, the goal in measuring is to determine the dimensions of a cubic volume which would enclose the object (i.e. the extreme dimensions). Enter height by width by depth and indicate the unit of measure (inches, feet, etc.). Artists' bases or those integral to the sculpture should be included in the measurements. If the base is separate, enter the base measurements separately.

For circular reliefs and mobiles, give diameter measurements. For mobiles, the diameter should be measured at the widest point when naturally extended. For multipart sculptures, record the total number of the parts and overall measurements. Example: 2 parts. Overall 4 x 4 x 6 ft. Each part 4 x 2 x 3 ft.

Always indicate if measurements are exact or approximate.

MARKINGS: Check as appropriate if the work is signed or dated. In the second section, record the text or form of any markings that appear on the work itself. These may include the artist's name and date. Indicate location and style of markings (i.e. Roman script, capital or lower case letters, etc.) and use a slash (/) between lines of text.

SUBJECT: Please give a brief description of the work, including its theme. In describing the work, start with the main element in the painting or sculpture and answer such questions as:

- Who or what is being depicted?
- How are they depicted? (reference postures, objects held, etc.)
- What events are taking place?

For abstract works, you might describe the predominant forms, colors, shapes, sizes, or textures.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Please list any additional information you think would be helpful to a researcher. Such information might include historical notes explaining the circumstances of creation (e.g. commissioned by the city; commissioned by the sitter; completed after the sitter's death, etc.), previous owners or locations of the work, artist's or sitter's biographical information or exhibition history.

Conservation notes might include a general statement regarding the condition of the piece (i.e., evidence of cracks, staining or discoloration, etc.). If information is available, reference past conservation treatments (i.e. Cleaned and repaired by H. Smith, 1986; old varnish removed and new protective coating applied).

If you have any further questions regarding registering paintings or sculptures with the Inventories, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

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Smithsonian American Art Museum
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