FORMAT			
1. **Name of resource**	**Museum Best Practices for Managing Controversy**		
2. Location	https://ncac.org/resource/museum-best-practices-for-managing-controversy		
3. Alternative location			
4. Author[s]	National Coalition Against Censorship		
5. Publisher/producer/host	National Coalition Against Censorship		
6. Year	2022		
7. Suggested citation	National Coalition Against Censorship (2022). Museum Best Practices for Managing Controversy. National Coalition Against Censorship, available at https://ncac.org/resource/museum-best-practices-for-managing-controversy		
8. Languages in which available	English (web pages translate automatically)		
9. Geographic area resource relates to	US with global relevance (subject to local laws)		
10. Does the resource relate to a specific time frame?			
11. Type	Report		
	Toolkit/Framework/Roadmap	Yes	
	Sign-post to other resource (database)		
	Case studies		
	Other		
12. Part of an initiative?			
COLLECTIONS AND COLLECTIONS-BASED INSTITUTIONS			
13. Explicit links to collections	No		
14. Explicit links to museums/libraries/archives	Yes		
15. Types of institutions relevant to	Museums	X	
	Archives	X	
	Libraries	X	
	Other	X	
16. Does the resource relate to specific disciplines?	Arts, humanities and social sciences: philosophy, psychology, religion, social sciences, law, politics, language, arts and recreation,	X	

	architecture, literature, history, geography and ethnology, anthropology, archaeology	
	Science, natural history, technology, medicine, engineering, manufacturing	X
17. If no explicit links to collections, justification for inclusion	The resources can be used by collections-based institutions to plan related activities that could result in conflict.	

HOW IT CONTRIBUTES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	
18. Collections-related activities the resource relates to (mark all that apply)	
Develop collections to protect and safeguard wider cultural and natural heritage more effectively, for example by targeting collecting to threatened forms of heritage in strategic ways	X
Use collections to promote learning and educational opportunities that contribute to sustainable development more effectively, for example education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development and/or skills development relating to collections	X
Use collections to promote cultural participation/social inclusion more effectively, for example by reducing barriers to participation, to ensure no-one is 'left behind'	X
Use collections to promote sustainable tourism more effectively, for example by developing new products based on local cultural heritage, and/or considering the rights of stakeholder groups in relation to collections	
Use collections to support research that contributes to sustainable development (including all forms of personal and self-directed research at all levels that make use of stored collections) more effectively, for example by providing effective facilities, collections and information to meet researchers' needs	
Make decisions around collections that contribute to sustainable development more effectively	
i. employment (recruiting, staff training, staff safety)	
ii. energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, reduction, monitoring and reporting	
iii. waste management and reduction of waste	
iv. transport (forms of transport, energy use)	
v. commercial activities including copyright and IP	
vi. governance and management	X
vii. security, disaster preparedness and risk reduction	

Direct external leadership, partnerships and collaborations towards sustainable development more effectively, for example by developing impactful partnerships	X
19. Does the resource relate clearly to any international conventions (mark all that apply)?	
Culture conventions:	
1952, 71 Protection of Copyright and Neighbouring Rights	
1954 Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict	
1970 Fighting Against the Illicit Trafficking of Cultural Property	
1972 Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	
2001 Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	
2003 Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	
2005 Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	
Rio Conventions:	
Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)	

AIMS AND CONTENT

20. What issues does the resource aim to address?	"The Museum Best Practices for Managing Controversy is designed to provide museums and other cultural institutions of any size or scope with guidelines that can help manage controversial content and transform controversy into a learning moment about the nature of diverse opinions and an institution's ability to address them. This non-binding document of best practices offers guidance to an institution concerned about or confronted with accusations of inappropriate, objectionable, or offensive content. Institutions caught in the frantic environment of controversy can refer to this set of strategies designed to calm the waters, open space for conversation and learning, and prevent or defuse a potentially volatile situation through deliberate steps to create meaningful dialogue. When these guidelines are regularly used by cultural institutions and referenced as a recommended resource by their respective professional associations, the body of practice across the field becomes stronger and more consistent, building credibility and a positive image of all organizations. The simple ingredient of a nationally recognized protocol creating time and space to open dialogue may prevent an over-cautious, self-punishing reaction by institutions caught up in controversy. It may also encourage the institution to address sensitive issues of civic engagement and help fulfil the museum's mission as a forum for the exploration of diverse ideas…"

	Taken together, the Free Speech Commitment and the procedures to anticipate and respond to controversy will help to:
	• Equip an institution with the tools to respond to criticism of controversial content;
	• Improve relationships with the public;
	• Support the right of audience members to access a wide variety of work;
	• Safeguard the exhibiting institution against self-censorship;
	• Introduce transparency;
	• Ensure institutional support of curatorial decision-making; and
	• Provide board member orientation.
	The promotion and use of these strategies by national organizations and leading institutions will help validate them as the best practices in the field, and will help create communities of support when controversy arises in a specific institution."
21. Intended audience of resource	Museums and related decision-makers
22. Process of development	"In February 2011, as censorship of the National Portrait Gallery exhibition Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture, provoked deep controversy nationwide, the NCAC and the Vera List Center for Art and Politics convened a group of arts professionals, consultants, and First Amendment lawyers for a closed policy session. The goal was to brainstorm on ways to become pro-active on issues of artistic and curatorial freedom and to reverse a cycle of politically motivated accusations and censorship still assaulting many art institutions. The result is a new set of best museum practices. At a minimum, this document offers art institutions embroiled in controversy procedures and guidelines to secure, among other things, time for the thoughtful and

| | | deliberate consideration and consultation with key stakeholders. It sketches out how such procedures prevent the immediate removal of work in response to outside pressure, and it helps establish support for museums that are willing to mount provocative, potentially controversial exhibitions.

This is the process by which NCAC and the Vera List Center arrived at the document: A nation-wide examination of existing museum guidelines yielded a first crop of issues, languages and propositions. The resulting master document was circulated among museum directors and other arts and educational and media professionals for feedback. In the fall of 2011, a working group convened with representatives of NCAC, the Vera List Center, Americans for the Arts, the American Association of Museums (now the American Alliance of Museums), the Association of Art Museum Curators, the College Art Association, the Association of Art Museum Directors, as well as individual museum directors and academics. The Association of Academic Museums and Galleries joined the team in the spring of 2012. Over the course of several meetings and further outreach, they developed the final version of the Best Museum Practices document." |
|---|---|---|
| 23. Organisation/structure /contents | | Preamble
1. Public Statement Affirming Commitment to Artistic and Intellectual Freedom of Speech ("Freedom of Speech Commitment");
2. Preparation in Advance of Upcoming Programs and Potential Controversy, through agreement on clear curatorial procedures, feedback mechanisms, and educational plans;
3. Procedures for Addressing the Press or Complaints from the Public after an Exhibition or Special Program Opens |
| **FRAMEWORKS** | | |
| 24. Framework structure | | The best practices are presented as bulleted suggested actions, that can be considered as a framework. |
| 25. Relevant policy considerations | | Yes |
| 26. Resources for implementation identified | | Yes |
| 27. Specific assessment points/indicators/miles tones/action plan for monitoring | | Yes |
| **28. ASPECTS OF SUSTAINABILITY COVERED BY RESOURCE (mark all that apply)** | | |

People (social sustainability)	X
Planet (environmental sustainability)	
Prosperity (economic sustainability)	
Peace	X
Partnerships	

29. CROSS-CUTTING CONSIDERATIONS COVERED BY RESOURCE (mark all that apply)	
Gender perspectives	
North and South perspectives	

HOW THE RESOURCE CONTRIBUTES TO AGENDA 2030 AND THE SDGs	
HOW AGENDA 2030 AND THE SDGs FEATURE IN THE RESOURCE	
30. SDGs and Agenda 2030 specifically mentioned?	No
31. SDGs specifically mentioned?	No
32. SDG targets specifically mentioned?	No
33. SDG indicators specifically mentioned?	No

SDGs AND SDG TARGETS AND LINKAGES	
34. Comments on SDG linkages	The resource can help ensure that museums and other institutions (that can also use the best practices) fulfil their responsibilities in terms of education and public access to information, and collections development, while managing their reputations. The resource supports SDG targets 4.7 (Education for Sustainable Development), 9.1 (sustainable infrastructure), 10.2 (universal inclusion), 11.4 (managing heritage), 16.1 (reducing all forms of violence), 16.3 (promote the Rule of Law), 16.6 (effective, accountable and transparent institutions), 16.10 (protect the right to information and fundamental freedoms), 16.B (laws and policies for sustainable development)
35. SDGs and SDG targets the resource helps advance	
SDG 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all 4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable	Numbers of people in each type of programme drawing on collections from different demographic groups. Increases in numbers of people in each type of programme from different demographic groups. Proportion of people involved in such programmes in relation to overall audience size. Evidence that learners have acquired knowledge and skills to promote sustainable development.

lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development	
SDG 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all	Development of research-useful collections to support reliable, sustainable and resilient use by researchers and others. Number and proportion of collections facilities and stores that support economic development and human well-being. Number and proportion of collections facilities and stores that provide affordable and equitable access for all. Investment in collections facilities. Inclusion of collections information in regional and transborder initiatives, notably via digital access for discoverability.
SDG 10. Reduce inequality within and between countries 10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status	Collections development to ensure that collections effectively meet the needs of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. Number and proportion of educational and participatory programmes that promote participation irrespective of social or other status. Numbers and proportions of people making use of collections in relation to the demographic of the local population. Numbers and proportions of people involved in focused programmes aimed at promoting social, economic and political inclusion. Numbers and proportions of people from different demographic groups involved in decision-making processes relating to collections and collections-based institutions.

	Number and types of partnerships that build relationships with marginalized groups, individuals and communities.
SDG 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable 11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage	***11.4.1 Total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage*** Plans, policies and procedures in place for the safe use of collections for a variety of purposes, protecting and safeguarding both collections and those who use them. Plans, policies and procedures in place for the identification, safeguarding and protection of cultural and natural heritage at risk. Collecting programmes in place to protect, safeguard and make use of cultural and natural heritage, addressing the needs of communities and stakeholders, and ensuring that collections can be an effective resource for sustainable development. Number and diversity of educational, awareness-raising, research programmes, and partnerships that aim to strengthen protection of cultural and natural heritage.
SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Collections development that relates to violent crime, and violence of all kinds, and the relationships between violence and mortality. Number of educational, awareness-raising and partnership programmes drawing on collections that aim to reduce violence and related mortality.
SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Collections development that relates to the rule of law, equality before the law, and justice for all. Number of activities drawing on collections, for example educational, research and partnership activities, that promote the rule of law at national and international levels, and that promote a culture of lawfulness, and the right of all to justice.

SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. 16.6 Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels	***16.6.2 Proportion of the population [audience/users/non-users] satisfied with their last experience of public services*** Access to information, and accountability policies and mechanisms, in place. Effective institutional arrangements, both for own working and for working in partnership with other sectors, in place. Plans and arrangements in place for extraordinary circumstances such as natural and human-caused disasters. Effective arrangements in place to fulfil legal and social obligations and responsibilities. Effective arrangements in place for transparent communication and reporting of institutional performance. Effective arrangements in place for transparent decision-making and accountability.
SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	Adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information. Plans in place, and plans implemented to enhance public access to information relating to collections. Plans in place, and plans implemented to support fundamental freedoms, in line with human rights, national and international agreements and legislation. Plans and procedures in place for public access to information relating to the operation and management of collections-based institutions. Complaint mechanism in place for public to use where public access to information and fundamental freedoms not supported or fulfilled.
SDG 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective,	***16.B.1 Proportion of population [audience/users/non-users] reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed in the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law***

accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. 16.B Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development		Number and proportion of policies that incorporate sustainable development considerations, in the full sense of recognizing all three of social, economic and environmental considerations.			
1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	