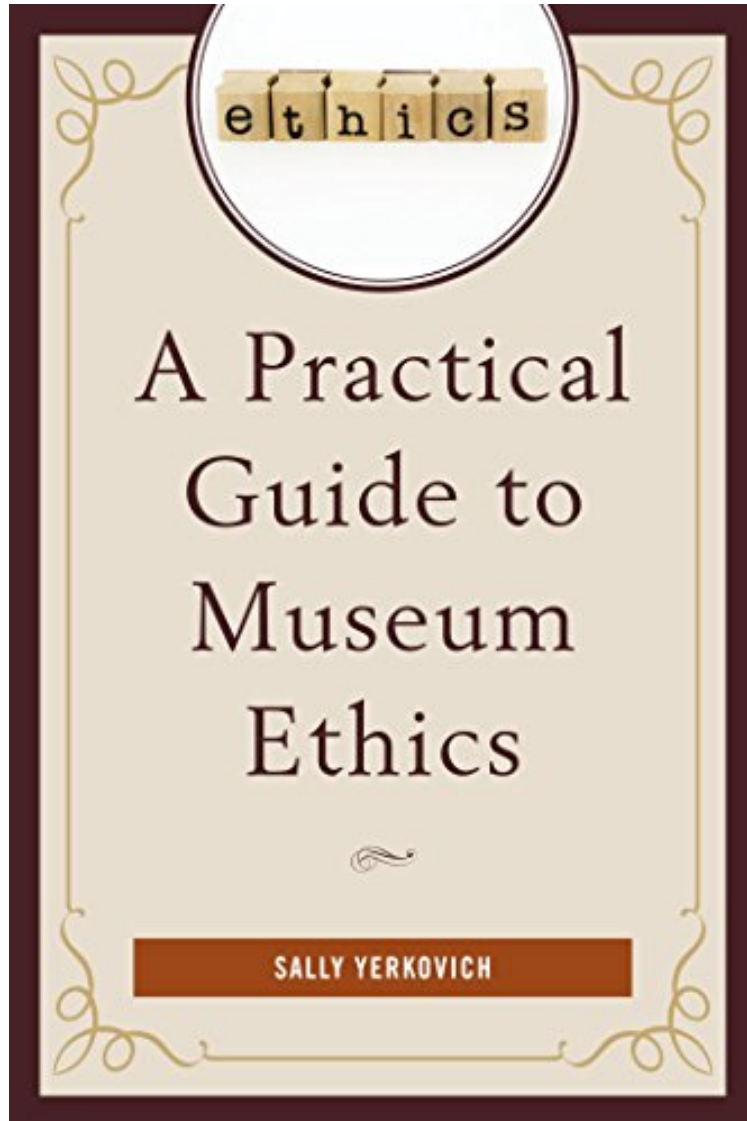


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## A Practical Guide to Museum Ethics

*Sally Yerkovich*

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#616919 in eBooks 2016-03-07 2016-03-07 File Name: B01EKMOEF0 | File size: 68.Mb

**Sally Yerkovich : A Practical Guide to Museum Ethics** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Practical Guide to Museum Ethics:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating stories and complicated questions make this a great read. By Customer You don't have to be a museum professional to enter into the complex world of ethical decision making described in this book. The stories in each chapter read like a great detective story. Will they? Won't they? Should they? Shouldn't they? What are the "right" answers? Well written, gripping, a great read!

Are your collections up for grabs? Does the spouse of one of your trustees have too much to say about developing the exhibition schedule? How much is too much public participation? Where does a curator's authority begin and end? With money increasingly difficult to raise, is a museum more likely to accede to potential funders' demands even when those demands might compromise the museum's integrity? When a museum is struggling with debilitating debt, should the sale of selected items from its collections and the use of the resulting proceeds bring the museum into a more stable financial position? When a museum attempts to build its attendance and attract local visitors by crowdsourcing exhibitions, is it undermining its integrity? Ethical questions about museum activities are legion, yet they are usually only discussed when they become headlines in newspapers. Museum staff respond to such problems under pressure, often unable to take the time required to think through the sensitive and complex issues involved. Grounded in a series of case studies, *A Practical Guide to Museum Ethics* confronts types of ethical dilemmas museums face and explores attempts to resolve them in chapters dealing with accessibility, disability, and diversity; collections; conflict of interest; governance; management; deaccessioning; and accountability and transparency. Suitable for classroom use as well as a professional reference, here is a comprehensive, practical guide for dealing with ethical issues in museums.

Is it ethical for museums to display classical sculpture without revealing conservation history? What steps, if any, should museum staff take if an autistic child behaves in a disruptive manner? Should museums retain or return Native American sacred objects? These and other types of challenging questions are posed by *A Practical Guide to Museum Ethics*, which considers all types of ethical dilemmas that arise in the museum field. Yerkovich poses various hypothetical situations involving ethics in daily museum work and provides possible solutions through the form of case studies. Topics include acquiring and managing collections, deaccessioning materials, controversy and censorship, conflicts of interest, and diversity and accessibility. The aim is to encourage museum professionals to think proactively rather than reactively when museum controversies become newspaper headlines and to engage people in regular conversation on ethical issues in museums. The work draws heavily on the American Alliance of Museums' Code of Ethics for Museums along with other governing documents on ethics in the museum field included as appendixes. This practical guide is a required resource for museum professionals and students in museum studies programs. The book's accessible language and thought-provoking case studies make it appropriate for all readership levels. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Undergraduates through professionals/practitioners. (CHOICE) This volume, divided into 10 chapters, explores a wide range of areas in the museum world, from acquisition of collections and deaccessioning items to fundraising, external pressures on museums, collection conservation, and diversity and access. Issues of cultural heritage, censorship, and management responsibility are also addressed. Also included are four codes of ethics developed by various American museum organizations. The book employs 'hypothetical and real-life cases' to wrestle with all of these issues. It also provides a multistep framework for analyzing and resolving potential ethical issues in the museum setting. Although focused on museums, this volume could also interest others studying ethics, as the topics examined here are not ones generally discussed in broader analyses of ethics. Their real-life setting should expand the reader's reflection. Academic and some public libraries should consider this reasonably priced work. (American Reference Books Annual) This is a book that the museum field has been waiting for since the American Alliance (then Association) of Museums undertook revision of the Code of Ethics for Museums in 1991.... This book can go a long way towards generating productive dialogues about ethical practice. It should be required reading for anyone who teaches museum studies, works with boards of directors, or is responsible for writing a museum's code of ethics. (New England Museum Association) 'Wide-ranging, bursting with case studies, this guide to museum ethics is written by an expert in museum practice who has been there, done that. Not full of theoretical hand-wringing, or of gargantuan length, this book will be of real use to museum people all over the world, including governing bodies, which carry responsibility but which often fail to grasp the niceties of what is and what isn't ethical. My only complaint is that I wish this book had been written sooner.' (David Fleming, Director, National Museums Liverpool) About the Author Sally Yerkovich is the director of the Institute of Museum Ethics at Seton Hall University and an adjunct professor in the Museum Professions Program at Seton Hall as well as in the Museum Anthropology Program at Columbia University. A member of the Ethics Committee for the International Council of Museums (ICOM), the only international organization representing museums and museum professionals, she worked extensively with museums in Central and Eastern Europe as President of the Fund for Arts and Culture. She is a trained mediator for arts and cultural heritage issues. A cultural anthropologist with over thirty years of experience in high profile cultural institutions in New York and Washington, DC, she held leadership positions at the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Endowment for the Arts, South Street Seaport Museum and Museum of the City of New York. She was president and CEO of The New Jersey Historical Society, interim executive director at the Museum for African Art, and first president of the Tribute NYC Center.