CFP for edited volume, *The Politics of Provenance: Collecting Global Art in North America*

While the concept of "provenance" is most often invoked in relation to the legal chain of custody of an object, it also more broadly refers to an object's place of origin as well as the journey it took on the way to its current context or resting place. This volume, for which Dr. Madeline Eschenburg and Dr. Elizabeth Emrich-Rougé invite contributions, focuses on why that origin and journey matter in the context of North American art institutions during the twentieth century. What do collections of objects from around the world say about the values, politics, and cultures of the individuals and institutions involved in their acquisition?

The rich literature on North American art collecting has broadly focused on the acquisition of and market for European and American art in the United States and Canada. (See for example Fowle and Cleary 2025; the Frick Collection Study Series 2014–24) Edward J. Sullivan, as part of the Frick Collection series, has also highlighted histories of collecting colonial and modern Latin American art in the United States. Building upon this valuable foundation, the current volume instead uses "North America" as a framework of analysis to investigate the commonalities and differences between collections of global art, including collections of art from Indigenous communities, formed across and within the national boundaries of Canada, the United States, and Mexico. It hopes to illuminate the political implications of individual collectors', dealers', and institutions' acquisitions made at particular times and places across the continent. Furthermore, it will consider the question of individual objects' provenance and the impact of that chain of ownership on the value, perception, or legal status of an object at smaller, regional institutions—a scale of analysis often neglected in favor of higher-profile provenance and restitution projects focusing on more well-known institutions. Asking such questions will raise further queries concerning the political reasons behind which objects' histories are given attention in the context of limited resources that so often characterise smaller institutions.

Through focusing our analysis on small- and medium-sized regional institutions, this volume aims to highlight a relatively understudied section of the North American cultural landscape. The editors anticipate including case studies as well as broader surveys of how global artwork of any time period from Asia, Oceania, Africa, and Latin America as well as artwork from Indigenous groups were added to the collections of regional art museums and museums connected to universities and colleges during the latter half of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. Often arriving as a gift or bequest by private donors or corporations, these artworks and collections represent an intersection of the perspectives, interests, and politics of multiple actors within the art world, whose monetary, cultural, social, and educational values and goals in relation to art objects are often at odds.

Current chapters include analysis of the formation of contemporary Chinese art collections in the United States, Islamic art collections for design education, multinational corporations' patronage of Latin American printmaking, and the provenance of collections of Soviet and Russian Modernist artwork. In particular, we are eager to hear from scholars engaging with

collections of art from Indigenous communities and those working on the histories of twentieth-century collecting at Canadian and Mexican institutions.

Possible questions to be explored in this volume could include, but are not limited to:

- How did local or global politics of the twentieth and twenty-first century impact institutional collecting trends, and how does our current political moment, in turn, impact our understanding and analysis of these past collecting practices and trends?
- How do these collecting histories contribute to or resist the consolidation of "centers" and "peripheries" in the way global art has been collected, studied, and valued?
- What do trends in collecting reveal about the values and biases of North American collectors and museums in relation to education, history, entertainment, and culture?
- How do North American museum collections reflect, challenge, or subvert shared values in relation to Indigenous and non-Western visual culture and heritage?
- What do institutions across the Canada-United States-Mexico borders share in collecting practices, and how does language figure into those shared practices?
- How do the collecting histories of non-European art by small- and medium-sized institutions in North America contribute to ongoing efforts to complicate theories of provenance that were developed most robustly in the context of restitution cases for art illegally acquired under National Socialism?

Collectively, these histories from across the continent illuminate shared experiences, interests, and perspectives by North American collectors and institutions, and give us insight into the continent's diverse cultures and reasons for collecting, preserving, and displaying artwork from around the world.

The volume editors welcome proposals consisting of an abstract (300 words or less) and bio (100 words or less) to be submitted to politicsofprovenance@gmail.com by **31 May 2026**. We anticipate inviting full chapter manuscripts (8000 words or less including all notes) by **31 December 2026.**

Please contact the editors, Dr. Madeline Eschenburg (Butler University) and Dr. Elizabeth Emrich-Rougé (Independent Scholar), at politicsofprovenance@gmail.com with any questions.