

DESCRIPTION

The Fine Arts Collection consists of approximately 3,000 Canadian works of art which are displayed in the public and representational areas of official residences and chanceries at 122 posts abroad and at 7 Rideau Gate and the Lester B. Pearson Building in Ottawa. The Department also borrows or rents artworks, for display in Canada, from the Canada Council Art Bank, the National Gallery and the National Museums. The Department began acquiring art for missions abroad in the late 1930's. These early acquisitions were carried out by a "Fine Arts Committee" and guided and documented by the National Gallery until 1952 when the Supplies and Properties Division of External Affairs became responsible for the administration of the Collection. In 1982 the Physical Resources Bureau and the Fine Arts Committee established the Fine Arts Programme and plans for a museum record and maintenance system were initiated.

Analysis - selection - application - reevaluation are the steps followed to establish a museum standard system. Activities are the responsibility of the curator. Major activities include the following:

- a) analysis of existing records;
- b) selection of a computer system;
- c) design of a data base; research and correlation of information; inputting the acquired information into the computer and proofreading and correcting the data to make the system operational;
- d) evaluation of the system.

The activities will be carried out by MRPF and CHIN. The result will be an information management system which will make possible the manipulation of a large volume of data with maximum flexibility and minimum support staff. This, in turn, will result in a master inventory of the Department's art holdings; the ability to better serve the posts in relation to allocation, maintenance, restoration and conservation of artworks; the establishment of yearly loan agreements to better maintain the safekeeping of the artworks and the ability to produce statistics and research data relating to the collection. The daily user will be MRPF but information will have an effect on, or be disseminated to all posts. The Department will also have the ability to answer inquiries such as those received from the House of Commons, the Treasury Board, Internal Audit and outside galleries and institutions. The project will be considered a success with the production of a master inventory.