



Project for the Preservation and Promotion of Kuwait's Cultural Heritage

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART STORAGES

Survey Report

March 2018

prepared by UNESCO



This survey report on the condition of the storage facilities of the Museum of Modern Art has been developed as a component of the project entitled “Preservation and Promotion of Kuwait’s Cultural Heritage,” directly responding to Activity 2.1 of the project’s Workplan to ‘Improve Storage and Inventory Systems’.

The survey was conducted during February 2018 and was made in consultation with staff from the Kuwait National Museum. Implementation of the recommendations identified in this assessment will be made throughout 2018 with the cooperation of the Kuwait National Museum and NCCAL staff.

General Presentation

The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in Kuwait is located on the Arabian Gulf Street close to the Maritime Museum. This is an historical building that was built in 1938 to house the Madrasa Al Sharqiya, a school for boys considered one of the oldest and most prestigious schools in Kuwait. The Museum has a collection of modern Arab and international art.

Maria Metzani assessed the storage area of MOMA by inspection in February 2018. This has been conducted as a measure for execute Activity 2.1 'Improve Storage and Inventory Systems'.

A. Management

Information concerning management of the collection was acquired during discussions with the Director of MOMA. In order to properly assess the storage it is essential that the actual policy documents are also revised.

Organization personnel and space:

- The Director undertakes activities for documentation and registration.
- The first floor of the Museum is used to store objects. This is not a storage area; the exhibition halls and visitor corridors are used to store the collection.

Procedures and Administrative Documents:

It is essential that there is a policy document for incoming/lending objects. In the case that this document already exists, it needs to be reviewed and updated.

Procedures for the personnel:

There is no administrative document concerning personnel and procedures, as described by the Museum Director. It is essential that administrative documents exist and are followed.

B. Collection

The museum collection consists of paintings, ceramic objects and sculpture (Fig. 1, 2). There is no digital registration of objects.



Fig. 1: Ceramic objects and sculpture



Fig. 2: Paintings and sculpture

Physical state of the collection in studied storage and the potential aggressors:

It was observed that the objects of the collection were generally in good condition. Main aggressors are environmental instability, incoming natural light, lack of environmental monitoring, dust and inadequate physical support of the objects. Almost all objects are placed on the floor with the exception of sculptures on pedestals.

Furthermore, there is a need to separate collection from non-collection items.

Study of the Documentation System

The collection must be entered into a digital accession register.

In the accession register object id number, brief description, condition and location number of each object should be mentioned.

Study of the Location System

It is apparent that there is no location system within the collection.

Cleaning:

Cleaning of the storage area is not efficient, as many objects are directly placed on the floor. The storage is in need of organised, regular housekeeping.

Current use of storage areas:

- The Director is currently on the process of photography and scanning 2D objects (Fig. 3).
- The way the storage is organised cannot be used (Fig. 4).
- Having a logbook to record visitor's use and object movement will provide useful data for the museum storage use.



Fig. 3. Photography of paintings

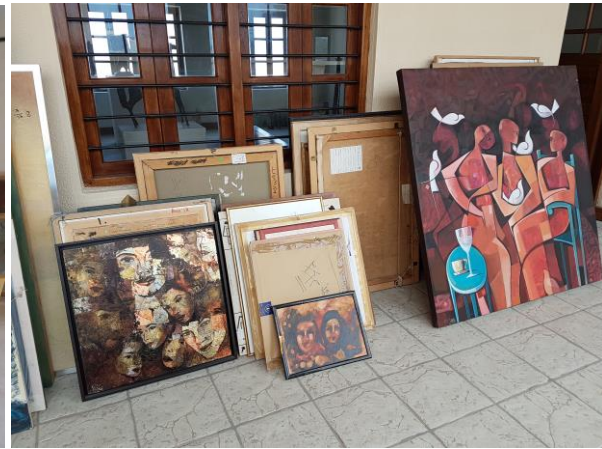


Fig. 4. Paintings on the floor

C. Building

MOMA uses the first floor to store the collection. The structure itself is in good condition. The main drawback is incoming natural light through windows. All piping for air-conditioners runs on top of windows, along one side of the rooms.

Possibility of movement in all the storage facilities:

There is free space in the corridors and rooms although objects are stored on the floor. However, if objects were stored in appropriate storage units they would occupy much less space.

D. Equipment and Furniture

There is no storage furniture.

Ladders/Scaffolding:

There are no ladders.

General Lighting:

Artificial lighting is sufficient. The natural light from windows should be blocked or filtered.

Climate:

There is no installed system for monitoring environmental conditions in the storage facilities.

- There are two air-conditioners in each room (Fig. 6)
- There are no portable humidifiers or de-humidifiers.
- There are no fans on the ceilings.
- There are no exhaust fans.
- There are no dust-filtering units.



Fig. 5: Fire hose station



Fig. 6: Air-conditioners and windows

Fire

- The floor is equipped with a fire hose station (Fig. 5).
- There are no smoke detectors on the ceiling of the rooms.

Security

- There are no CCTV cameras. Windows need to be fenced and securely lock.

Transportation

- There is no transportation equipment.

Material for cleaning

- There is no cleaning equipment or materials.

E. Conclusions and Recommendations

Storage can become a vital part of the museum, as a centre of study, communication and inspiration.

The main challenge is to **allocate and organise a storage area** within MOMA, so that movement of objects is kept to a minimum.

- For example, the last room in the first floor where photography currently takes place could be used and organised as museum storage. It is preferable however, to locate the storage at the ground floor area with large entry doors.

A **digital inventory system** should be organised. A proper inventory is essential as a quantitative and qualitative catalogue of the collection.

- UNESCO consultant is currently reviewing the status of the KNM inventory and will submit a formal recommendation. It is recommended that MOMA also use the same system.

The management of the collection in terms of **policy and administrative documents** is essential.

- UNESCO consultant can work with MOMA in developing relevant documents

A **location system** will provide a specific location for each and every object of the collection. There should be comprehensive location codes for all areas in the museum and all storage and display furniture. Movement and current location of each object should be noted on the digital inventory. It will enable quick access to objects with minimal handling.

Storage units should be **adapted** to the dimensions and type of the objects store. This will both improve the protection of the collection and the efficient use of the space. Custom made equipment is available to store 2D objects. Larger objects should be stored in the lower shelves or on storage platforms, pallets or carts on wheels. No object should be directly placed on the floor.

A museum storage area is to store the collection. Packing materials, publications, equipment, old museum furniture and any other **non-collection items** should be moved to other locations.

The Storage areas should be easy to clean and should be kept as dust free and clean as possible. It is therefore necessary to keep floors and aisles empty of objects. A good **housekeeping** system should be established so that storages are regularly cleaned by trained staff.

- UNESCO will implement a training in reorganisation of storage areas in November 2018. It is recommended that MOMA staff participate.

Environmental monitoring and control is essential for the protection of the collection. Installation of data loggers will provide useful information on the storage environment. The use of humidifiers and dehumidifiers will provide a stable environment and can improve the preservation of sensitive material. Windows should be screened.

- MOMA should purchase and install an environmental data-logging programme. Study of the data will be used to assess the current conditions.

Security of storage can be improved by establishing rules and restricting access. Visitors can be registered in a log book. The installation of high security locks and CCTV system can improve security measures.

- Access policies must be reviewed by MOMA. This can be supported by the UNESCO consultant.
- MOMA should install appropriate security measures on doors and windows

All **electrical wiring and plumbing piping** should be insulated and kept in good condition.

- The Museum should maintain and upgrade all building infrastructure on a regular basis.

Activities as study, photography and registration of objects should be undertaken in separate, specific rooms connected to the storage areas.

- The Museum should allocate areas for supplementary activities connected to storage management

Additional equipment such as trolleys, carts, trays, ladders and tables should be readily available within the storage area at specified locations in order to facilitate safe handling and transportation of objects.

- The Museum should purchase required equipment