For immediate release
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The Northern Illinois University Art Museum is pleased to present *Looting, Hoarding, Collecting…*, an exhibition curated by students in the Museum Exhibitions and Interpretation class as a part of the Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program at NIU. This exhibition will be on view in the North and Hall Case Galleries of the NIU Art Museum from **April 3 – May 23, 2014; a public reception will be held on April 3, 2014 from 4:30 – 7:00 pm.**

This exhibition explores historic and current issues of looting and repatriation as they relate to museum collections. These issues have just begun to be examined in depth, and continue to challenge museum curators as they attempt to sort through the murky provenance of looted artifacts to determine whether or not objects should be returned to their original owners.

For example, ethical concerns have been raised recently regarding the return of many Native American artifacts. A specific case of repatriation stemmed from the **Wounded Knee Massacre of 1890** in which approximately two hundred members of the Miniconjou (Lakota) and Hunkpapa (Lakota) tribes of Cheyenne River Sioux were slaughtered by United States soldiers. In the aftermath of the attack, articles of clothing were cut away from the bodies of the deceased; personal effects and ceremonial items were also stolen from the scene. Over time, these objects have appeared in museum collections in the United States and around the world to document this historical tragedy. Several of the objects in question were eventually tracked down in Washington D.C. in the permanent collection of the Smithsonian Institution. In light of their horrific provenance, the Smithsonian returned the artifacts to the Cheyenne River Sioux a century after the massacre.

More recently during the **2011 political revolution in Egypt**, ancient mummies and other historical artifacts housed at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo were looted or destroyed. Issues regarding the repatriation of some of Egypt’s most coveted antiquities have been raised since before the conflict, as Egyptians have been pushing for the return of the Rosetta Stone from The British Museum since 2003. However, museum professionals have expressed concern regarding the legality of returning artifacts, and these issues have become even more complex in the aftermath of the revolution. As a result, the fate of the Rosetta Stone and other looted Egyptian artifacts remains in question. The ongoing situation in Egypt is just one of the myriad of examples illustrating the challenges affecting repatriation efforts on the part of museums.

The NIU Art Museum is located at the first floor of the west end of Altgeld Hall, at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and Saturdays from 12:00 – 4:00 p.m. Group tours may be arranged by appointment. For more information about our exhibitions, visit our website at [www.niu.edu/artmuseum](http://www.niu.edu/artmuseum).

The exhibitions and programs of the NIU Art Museum are sponsored in part by the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency; the Friends of the NIU Art Museum; and the Dean’s Circle of the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Additional programming and exhibition support came from the Harvey and Elizabeth Plotnick Fund, the NIU College of Visual and Performing Arts, and the NIU School of Art Visiting Artists and Scholars Fund.

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