

You are the recently appointed director of a private art museum with one of the finest art collections in the United States. The museum has been losing money steadily for several years, and now has a deficit of over \$500,000. The museum's endowment is large enough to cover the current deficit, but it cannot do so indefinitely. A group of active museum board members present you a plan that calls for selling \$25 million of valuable French Impressionist art works in order to create a new endowment fund for "collections care." This new endowment fund will cover costs associated with conservation, preservation, upgraded security, and new acquisitions. The code of ethics of the American Association of Museums forbids selling of art works for purposes other than acquiring more art. The American Association of Museum's code of ethics is not legally enforceable.

Should you adopt or reject the plan? In either case give your reasons.

Questions for the IIT Ethics Bowl (October 19, 1996)

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