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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Library

Policy No.: 4

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Responsible Executive: Associate University Librarian, Collections

Title: Policy on the Acquisition of Works of Art at the University of British Columbia (UBC) Library

Background & Purposes:

To best determine a policy on the acquisition of works of art at UBC Library, it is important to consider the broader context of the University. The Library is just one element of the University's cultural fabric; institutions such as the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, the Museum of Anthropology, and the Beaty Biodiversity Museum all play a significant role in the University's contributions towards culture for the Province and beyond. Given its mandate, structure, and the expertise of its curators, the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery has been charged with stewardship of the University's art collection and formulating a public art policy for the University as a whole.

Scope:

Works of art should be accepted for UBC Library's collection only if they fit within the collection policy of an acquiring unit or branch, are a logical supplement to existing Library collections, if the Library has the appropriate curatorial capacity to evaluate and acquire the work, and if the Library can provide the appropriate environmental conditions to properly store, care for, and use the art for teaching, study, exhibition, or other purposes.¹ The Library should obtain a legal title to all works of art acquired as gifts or purchased for the Library's collection whether they are publicly displayed or not.

Governing Principles:

1. Decisions to acquire works of art should take into consideration existing UBC Library collection development policies and such factors as assessed value, condition, legal title, terms of donation, security, maintenance and preservation needs. UBC Library will avoid acquiring works of art that are in poor condition or that require costly restoration, conservation, digitization and/or format migration, secure mounting, or special storage.

¹ An individual possesses "curatorial capacity" if he/she has appropriate expertise and training to evaluate potential items for acquisition in terms of quality, relevance to the collection, significance to the discipline, and support for curriculum and research.

2. The decision to acquire works of art for UBC Library's collection, in the context of normal, day-to-day collecting activities, resides with the Head (or his/her designated selector) of the unit or branch where the works will be cared for or displayed. If under normal collecting activities, the acquisition of the work(s) of art goes beyond the capacity of the unit or branch acquisitions budget, or its ability to catalogue the work(s) in a timely manner, the Head should approach the Associate University Librarian for Collections (AULC) for support as appropriate.

3. The authority to acquire works of art that fall outside of what would be acquired under normal collecting activities in a branch or unit, resides with the AULC. In such a case the AULC should consult with the University Librarian or the Deputy University Librarian, and the Head of the proposed receiving unit.

4. The decision to acquire a work of art should be properly documented. The documentation shall establish that: a) the receiving unit has the capability to care for, safely store, and catalogue or inventory the works in a reasonable time; and b) the acquisition has been accepted and signed off at all three levels. All works of art acquired in this manner should be included in an inventory of works of art held by UBC Library.

5. UBC Library acknowledges that expertise about visual art and the preservation and conservation of works of art resides with the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and its governing body, the Provost's Committee on University Art (PCUA). The PCUA, upon application, may create ad-hoc committees to advise the campus units about acquiring particular works of art. UBC Library should actively seek the advice of the PCUA on collecting works of art when appropriate.

6. This policy is meant to be consistent with the following extant policies at the University of British Columbia: The University of British Columbia Board of Governors

Policy 114: Donations; The University of British Columbia Board of Governors Policy 128: Deaccession of Works of Art and/or Cultural Materials for the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, the University Library, and the Museum of Anthropology; and UBC Library's Collection Development Policies: <http://collections.library.ubc.ca/about-us/collection-development-policy>.