

Procedures Concerning Art Donations to the Vancouver Art Gallery

The Vancouver Art Gallery's permanent collection was inaugurated with the purchase of 113 works of art in 1931. Since that time the collection has grown to over 10,200 art objects including paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures, installations, photographs and videos. With a focus on British Columbia, works of art by most of this province's important historical, modern and contemporary artists are represented in the collection as well as art works by many important Canadian and international artists. Works are acquired to reaffirm areas of strength in the collection as well as to fill in some noticeable gaps. Like most art museums, the Gallery depends on donations in order to build a visual art legacy for the people of this region. Therefore we value our relationships with art collectors and always seek to expand our connections with potential donors locally, nationally and internationally.

In general the donation procedure takes an average of 2 to 12 months depending on its complexity. Unfortunately the Gallery is unable to accept all donations offered. If the artwork does not meet the Gallery's acquisition priorities, recommendations of other potential institutions for the donation will be made if requested.

While each donation is unique, the following steps are intended to give a prospective donor a general idea of the process for donating art to the Gallery and the average time required.

1. There are many issues that are considered for each potential donation (for example, is there a context for the artist/work in the collection? does the Gallery have the means to care for the work for its lifetime?) Therefore, it is important for the donor to initially provide as much information as possible including artist, title, medium, date, size, condition, provenance and, where applicable, exhibition and publication history. It is preferred that this information be in the format of a letter and that a photograph of the artwork, if possible, is included along with contact information. This information on the proposed acquisition is circulated and discussed among curators. A response is made to the offer within three to eight weeks.
2. If the donation has potential to meet acquisition priorities, arrangements are made for a Curator to view the work off site or for the work to be brought to the Gallery.
3. Further internal discussions involving the Director ensue in order to determine the appropriateness of the work for the collection and whether to put the work forward for acquisition.
4. If the work is deemed an acquisition priority, the Donor is informed that the Gallery would like to put the work forward to the Acquisitions Committee. In anticipation of acceptance, a Gift Agreement Form is sent to the donor for signature.

5. If the value of the donation is considered to be over \$1,000, an independent appraisal must be obtained. If the value of the work is over \$20,000, two appraisals are required. The donor is kept informed of the appraisal process and is asked to cover this expense. This process can take anywhere from a few weeks to several months depending on the complexity of the artwork, whether photography is required, whether an appraisal can be done locally or not, and on the availability of recent sales records of comparable works by that artist.
6. On receipt of the appraisal, the donor is notified of the value and, if satisfactory, agreement is obtained to proceed with the presentation of the donation at the next Acquisitions Committee meeting. The Acquisitions Committee meets approximately four times a year.
7. Once the donation is approved by the Acquisitions Committee it is then ratified by the Board of Trustees at their next regular meeting.
8. Once the approvals are in place and the work has been officially acquired, a counter-signed copy of the Gift Agreement Form is returned to the donor. The Gallery's Donation in Kind Tax Receipt for the appraised value of the work is also forwarded to the donor.
9. In the case of donations where applications are made to the Canadian Cultural Property Export Review Board for certification (works must be at least 3 years old and be appraised at over \$10,000), the Gallery's Donation in Kind Receipt is sent after the Review Board has approved the application and it is made for the same amount deemed by the Review Board. The process of certification can be complex and take four to twelve months to complete.
10. In the case of bequests, the curators are available to consult on which works may be of interest to the Gallery. Please indicate that the donation is to be left to the Vancouver Art Gallery Association. Should the bequest be made without prior consultation all works will undergo a process of review as itemized in #2 and 3 above. If an artwork does not meet the Gallery's acquisition priorities for collection, the donation may be used for other important Gallery purposes such as fundraising or part of the art rental program.
11. If at any time during this process you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Assistant Curator, Emmy Lee at 604.662.4700, ext. 2216 or at elee@vanartgallery.bc.ca.