

Acquisitions – A Guide

University of British Columbia
Museum of Anthropology

Revised
October 22, 2021

Acquisitions Guidelines

This brief guide to the Museum of Anthropology's acquisitions process is intended to give potential donors/vendors some background information that will help them in making decisions about the future of their collections. The Acquisitions Committee's task is to ensure that the Museum of Anthropology is the right place for their object(s). The Museum's internal process is therefore a carefully considered one and can take more time than most people expect – anywhere from two to twelve months, and occasionally longer.

How does the Museum acquire collections?

Donation: The giving of one or more objects to the Museum. All donors must be the legal and rightful owners of said objects. The donation form includes the phrase "I hereby donate said property in whole to the UBC Museum of Anthropology with no reservations, restraints, or limiting conditions of any kind whatsoever."

Bequest: The bequeathing of one or more objects to the Museum as described in the owner's last will and testament. Museum staff can express interest in the object(s) at the time of the making of the will but always with the proviso that the object(s) will be subject to the same acquisitions process that applies to all donations (see below).

Purchase: The purchasing of one or more objects by the Museum. The vendor must be the legal and rightful owner of the objects and must be able to produce appropriate export paperwork if the purchase originates outside of Canada.

Commission: The commissioning by the Museum of a piece of work by a contemporary artist. The timing and cost of a commission are negotiated, as are the copyright conditions.

Transfer: The transfer of one or more objects from another institution.

How do I donate?

1. Initial contact is usually made with the Co-chairs of the Acquisitions Committee (see contact information on page 5). A preliminary discussion will determine whether or not the material offered is of interest to the Museum or may be better suited to another institution. For example, objects that do not fall within the Museum's collecting parameters are not brought forward to the Committee.

2. The objects offered, or preferably photographs of them, are submitted to the Co-chair with as much background information as possible. If the objects are brought into the Museum, the potential donor is issued with a Receipt of Artifacts form.

Please note: Objects can only be dropped off to the Co-chairs by appointment. Objects are not accepted by Security, Administration, or Reception. The Co-chairs may designate other staff to issue receipts on their behalf.

3. The proposed donation is put on the agenda of the next Acquisitions Committee meeting. Meetings generally occur once a month.

4. A database search is activated to determine whether similar objects exist in the collection.

5. The committee considers the donation. Factors such as duplication, condition, relevance, provenance, and available space are taken into account when making decisions. All decisions are by consensus and ratified by the Director.

6. If the committee is working from photographs, the donor may be requested to bring in the object(s) for examination prior to final acceptance.

7. If the donation is accepted, the donor will be asked to complete a donation form that legally transfers ownership to the Museum. The date of that legal transfer is considered to be the donation date. For example, if you bring in a donation in December 2020 and it is not accepted until March 2021, then the legal transfer date will be in 2021.

The annual deadline for all donations is November 30. Any donation arriving after this date will be considered in the following year.

Do I receive a tax receipt?

Yes, the Museum (through the University of British Columbia) routinely issues tax receipts for all donations.

It is strongly advised that all donors consult their accountants and/or the “Gifts and Income Tax” section of the Revenue Canada website:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/p113.html>.

The Museum does not issue tax receipts for archaeological material.

Most donations are appraised for their fair market value by external appraisers, and the donor is issued a tax receipt in accordance with the conditions stated in the Canadian Income Tax Act.

If a donation or a purchase is being proposed for certification as Canadian Cultural Property, the process is more complex. To be certified, an object must be of “national importance.” See the Canadian Cultural Property website for more information: <https://ccperb-cceebc.gc.ca/en/index-en.html>. Donors are advised to consult with their accountants as well as the Co-chairs of the Acquisitions Committee prior to considering this route.

Can I leave things to the Museum in my will?

Yes, if a lawyer forwards the relevant portion of the will, at the time it is drawn up. This will be kept on file. However, please note:

Leaving something to the Museum in a will does not presuppose automatic acceptance. Objects bequeathed to the Museum are subject to the same process as regular donations.

How do I sell an object to the museum?

Determine the asking price for the object. The Museum does not participate in this process.

Contact the Co-chairs of the Acquisitions Committee to discuss the object(s) offered, in order to determine whether the Museum is interested in a possible purchase, and to arrange an appropriate time to bring the object to the Museum for inspection. The Museum will not consider any object that has been imported into Canada without appropriate documentation.

All purchases are subject to available funds. Vendors will be informed at the time of inquiry if funds are not available.

If an object is purchased, the vendor will sign a Purchase Agreement form stipulating that the vendor is the legal and rightful owner of the object and has the right to sell it.

The vendor issues an invoice to the Museum for payment.

If an object was made on or after June 7, 1988, the purchase will be subject to the signing of a copyright agreement by the artist.

Does the Museum commission new works?

Yes, the Museum commissions new works from specific artists, when funds are available.

Normally, commissions are paid for in stages, the final payment being issued upon receipt of an invoice once the work has been completed and delivered.

All commissions are subject to the signing of a copyright agreement, the conditions of which are individually negotiated.

Please note: The information herein was originally prepared as a guide in 1999, was revised in March 2013 and on February 1, 2021, and is subject to change. For official purposes, please refer to the most current version of the Income Tax Act. If any of this information is not clear, please contact the Co-chairs of the Acquisitions Committee:

Dr. Jennifer Kramer
jennifer.kramer@ubc.ca
604-827-1868

Dr. Fuyubi Nakamura
fuyubi.nakamura@ubc.ca
604-827-2707