1. **Introduction**
   The DC Public Library (DCPL) celebrates art and exhibits as a source of learning, discovery, growth, and connection. This policy outlines our approach to selecting, presenting, acquiring and/or borrowing works of art and/or exhibitions. The policy ensures that art and exhibits at DCPL are integrated with DCPL cultural programs and advance its strategic priorities.

   Art should be a feature of every neighborhood library as each space allows, in addition to a robust art program at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. This includes permanent works of art, long-term loans of art, and temporary displays.

   Exhibits at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library are key to expanding District resident’s knowledge of the District’s rich past and are a portal to engagement in the District’s present and future. Exhibits may also be featured at neighborhood libraries, where space allows.

2. **Content and Freedom of Expression**
   The Art and Exhibits Program encompasses a wide variety of permanent and temporary works of various forms, such as visual, performance, multimedia, and community-based. Art and exhibits at the DCPL should reflect a wide range of views, expressions, opinions and interests, and may be provocative in content. DCPL promotes freedom of expression without restriction on content or form. DC Public Library adheres to the principles adopted by the American Library Association (ALA), as expressed in the “Visual and Performing Arts in Libraries: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights” statements.

   The views expressed in works exhibited at the Library are those of the creator and are not necessarily those of the D.C. Government, the Library, its Board of Trustees, its administration or staff. DC Public Library’s Art and Exhibits Program will comply with all D.C. Government policies, regulations and laws.

3. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**
   The Library is committed to making arts inclusive for all the citizens of the District of Columbia. Every resident of the District deserves the right to enjoy, participate in and benefit from DC Public Library’s cultural activities.

   The Library celebrates a diversity of histories, tracing the many roots of residents of the District, and the many cultures that have shaped its development. DCPL affirms the importance of local cultural identity and traditions, and recognizes the role that cultural recognition plays in supporting civic engagement and community
enrichment. Through our art and exhibits, we aim to recognize and elevate the diversity of cultures and identities in our city, to support a more equitable understanding of the District.

We aim to support worthy artistic and cultural activities that serve traditionally underserved communities or populations, especially those that are racially or culturally diverse. We also commit to ensuring representation on selection panels from residents of the neighborhood or community where the art will be placed, and from a diverse constituency of stakeholders.

4. Placement and Criteria for Art Installations and Exhibits
   a. Potential placement for art and exhibits must consider building design, facilities requirements, patron experience, preservation of open space, and safety and security considerations. Because neighborhood libraries differ widely in architectural style, size, age, and in the communities they serve, the appropriate spaces for art and exhibits in each vary widely, and may be very limited in some buildings.
   b. All art and exhibits must adhere to the Art and Exhibits Policy and support library programmatic themes. Art installations and exhibits should, where possible, have a meaningful connection to each object's distinct location in the library, and shall meet the goals of the Art and Exhibits Program.
   c. Art and exhibits should adhere to all laws and regulations, especially those related to obscenity, copyright, libel, defamation of character or invasion of privacy.
   d. Criteria for selecting art and exhibits for the Library is established in consultation with the Review Committee for each project. General criteria for all projects include: overall coherence, clarity, and visual impact; innovation; emotional impact; accessibility to a broad audience; cultural integrity; experience in and/or knowledge of local culture; and community engagement components, where relevant. Criteria must also factor in demonstrated professional accomplishment or recognized potential in the artist or designer’s chosen field. Additional context-specific criteria may be added to individual projects. An item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be selected. All selections shall comply with Federal and District law, regulations and policies, including the Hatch Act.
   e. A Review Committee will be established for each acquisition for permanent inclusion in the Library’s collection, or temporary loans of art or exhibits, whether via commission, donation, or acquisition. The Review Committee will be made up of the Director of Strategic Partnerships; the Design Coordinator; and at least one other Library staff, volunteer, community member or key stakeholder depending on the project. Each member of the Review Committee will be required to complete a Conflict of Interest form prior to their service on the panel.
5. Process for Selection of Art Installations and Exhibits
   a. There are three ways in which DCPL will select art installations and exhibits:
      i. DCPL may serve as a co-sponsor for art installations and exhibits.
      ii. DCPL may curate its own art installations and exhibits.
      iii. DCPL may consider unsolicited exhibitions, through a review process
detailed in DCPL “Exhibit Guidelines & Process,” accessible on the DCPL
website. Unsolicited temporary exhibitions will not be considered for
neighborhood libraries, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
   b. Installations lasting more than 12 months must be approved in accordance with
the criteria set forth in this policy no less than 60 days in advance of the
exhibition start date by the Executive Director, the Director of Strategic
Partnerships and the Design Coordinator in consultation with Public Services and
   c. Installations lasting less than 12 months must be approved in accordance with
the criteria set forth in this policy no less than 60 days in advance of the
exhibition start date by the Director of Strategic Partnerships and the Design
Coordinator in consultation with Public Services and Facilities management.
   d. Installations may be updated at the discretion of the Director of Strategic
Partnerships and the Design Coordinator in consultation with Public Services and
   e. Methods used for artist or exhibit commissions may include open competition,
invitational competition, or direct selection but shall comply with all District law,
regulations, and policies. Community involvement in the development of any new
art or exhibit created for the Library is prioritized in the selection process. For
new art or exhibits planned for libraries under construction, the selection and
approval process will be integrated into the overall project timeline.

6. Gifts of Artwork
   a. The Review Committee will consider prospective gifts of artwork, in accordance
with District and DCPL laws, regulations, and policies, in order to determine the
appropriateness for inclusion in the DC Public Library art collection.
   b. All gifts of art must be approved by the Director of Strategic Partnerships, the
Design Coordinator and the Manager of Special Collections, in consultation with
   c. Artwork acquired by the DCPL must adhere to the following unless an exception
is granted by the Director of Strategic Partnerships when the works are
specifically time-based or of a temporary nature and their installation is for a
limited duration.
DC Public Library
Arts and Exhibitions Policy

i. Be of sufficiently high artistic merit to warrant inclusion in the DCPL art collection, utilizing the selection criteria above, as adapted for the specific context/location.

ii. Be durable, sound, non-hazardous, and maintainable in terms of the nature of the materials.

d. DC Public Library will provide recognition to all individuals, groups and/or corporations who donate gifts of art to the Library.

e. Display of accepted artwork is at the discretion of the DCPL. There is no obligation for display.

7. Guidelines for Interpretation and Engagement
   a. Each artwork or exhibit installed at the DCPL should be accompanied by recommendations for interpretation and community engagement, possibly including staff training and public programs with the artist. The recommendations are the responsibility of the Director of Strategic Partnerships and the Design Coordinator, in consultation with appropriate DCPL leadership, and any curatorial advisors. Implementation is contingent upon available resources.
   b. All permanent artwork displayed in the DCPL will be accompanied by interpretive text stating the artwork’s background, the communities’ perspective, and the reason for the artwork’s installation in the library, to the extent possible.
   c. Another important form of interpretation is offered by programming, including public events, and formal and informal tours led by Library staff.

8. Insurance, Security and Liability
   Art and exhibits will be given reasonable care and protection within the limits of the usual operation of each library. DCPL staff will not monitor or secure exhibits. The exhibitor must release the Library from any responsibility for loss or damage to works on display, or during set-up, breakdown, or while being transported to or from the Library. Artwork owned by DCPL is insured through D.C. Government’s Office of Risk Management. The list of insured artwork is updated annually by the Design Coordinator.

9. Accessioning of Artworks
   All works acquired by DCPL shall be catalogued in the DCPL’s Special Collections inventory. Agreements are maintained by DCPL’s Special Collections.

10. Deaccessioning of Artworks
   DCPL will work to retain all accessioned artwork, but does retain the right to de-acquisition any items if it is deemed to be in the best interest of DCPL. De-acquisitions are recommended by the Director of Strategic Partnerships and the Design Coordinator, in consultation with appropriate DCPL leadership.
11. Maintenance and Removal
All artworks acquired by the DCPL shall be accompanied by a plan for long term maintenance and conservation. DCPL reserves the right at any point to remove artwork due to condition and/or to fulfill the Art and Exhibits Program vision. DCPL shall undertake due diligence in regard to matters that may have bearing upon each situation.

12. Request for Removal of Artworks
DCPL welcomes citizens’ expressions of opinion concerning artwork displayed at the Library. As with any item in DCPL’s collection, requests to remove materials will be considered by the Library within the context of the policies set forth in this document. To challenge an item, use the Contact Us form available on the website.