



THE BELKIN

NICOLE MULDER COLLECTIONS ASSISTANT



Figure 1. Sherry Grauer, *Dog-faced Boy and Friend*, 1973. Gift of Joyce Morton, 2019. Courtesy of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery.

ABOUT THE BELKIN

The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery at the University of British Columbia (UBC) is mandated to:

- Research, exhibit, collect, publish, educate, and develop programs in the field of contemporary art
- Promote understanding and discussion of contemporary art and contemporary issues in art history, criticism, and curating

As the Collections Assistant, I assisted the Registrar, Teresa Sudeyko, and Archivist, Anna Tidlund, with projects that aim to increase and manage access to the Belkin's collections of 5,000+ objects and 30,000+ archival documents. Due to COVID-19, I worked remotely from Ontario.

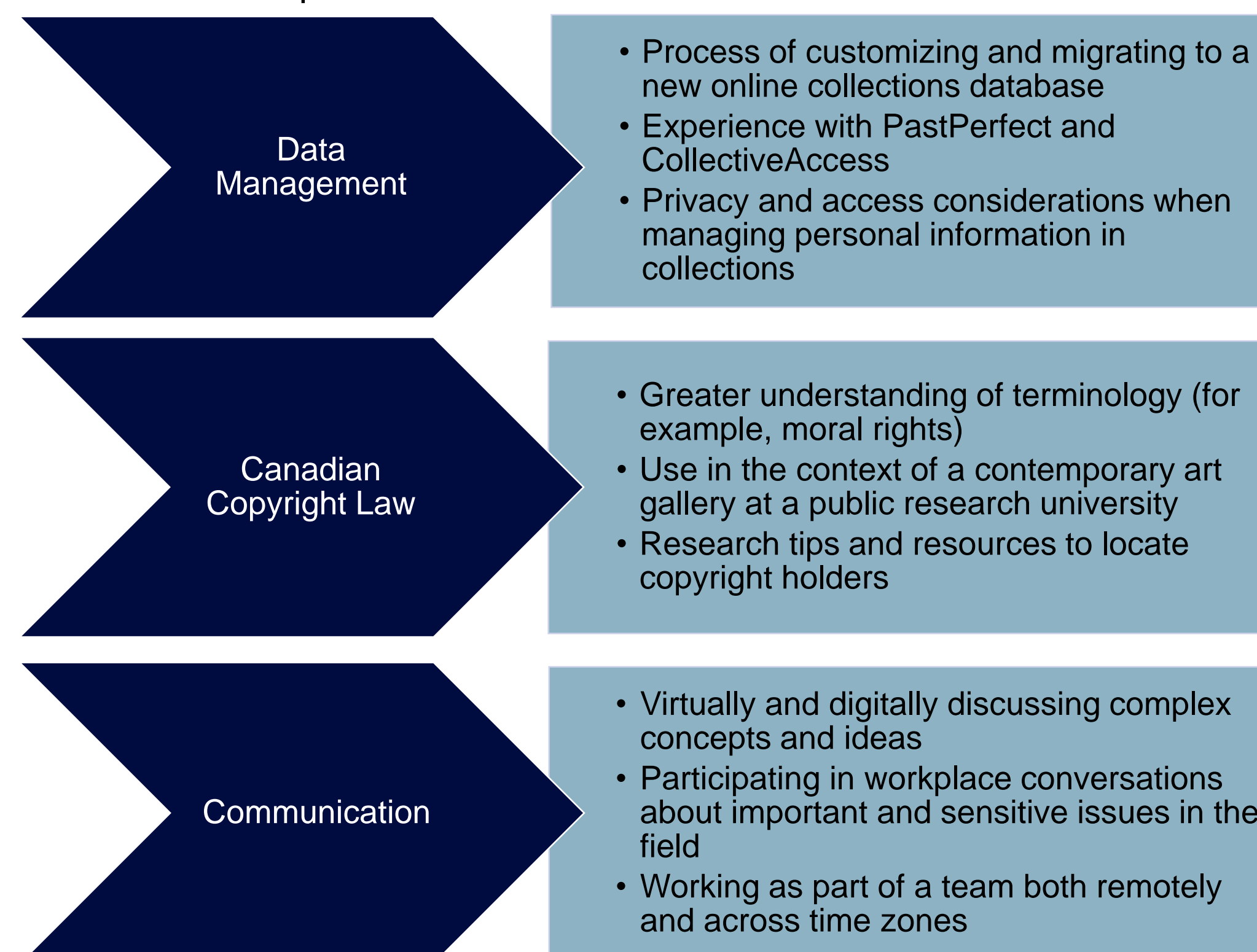
STAND OUT EXPERIENCES

- Working as part of the Belkin's team on a database project that will result in a customized online collections database hosted by CollectiveAccess
- Participating in meetings, webinars, and conversations about important issues, such as privacy and documenting diversity in collections
- Requesting permissions and reproduction rights for copyrighted materials, which entailed corresponding with artists I admire and previously studied
- Creating an extensive reference list of artist alias' and images that will support arrangement and description of the Morris and Trasov Archive

REFLECTIONS

- Connections made between my work and studies at UBC:
 - ARST 515 and ARST 545: Knowledge from Arrangement and Description courses helped me understand the Belkin's archives and potential barriers to user access in online descriptions and finding aids
 - LIBR 580: Collection Management provided me with foundational knowledge of managing special format collections similar to those of the Belkin
 - ARST 596 and LIBR 596: Professional Experiences at the Vancouver Maritime Museum Archives and Vancouver Art Gallery Library and Archives gave me exposure to collections management software programs, including CollectiveAccess

- Skills developed and lessons learned:



- Effect the work has had on my academic and career plans:
 - Influenced my final year at UBC, including my decision to extend this position into the fall term and to take a course on privacy and access (ARST 565)
 - Reinforced my desire to work in collections management and in a setting that combines my background in art and museums with my library and archival studies at UBC

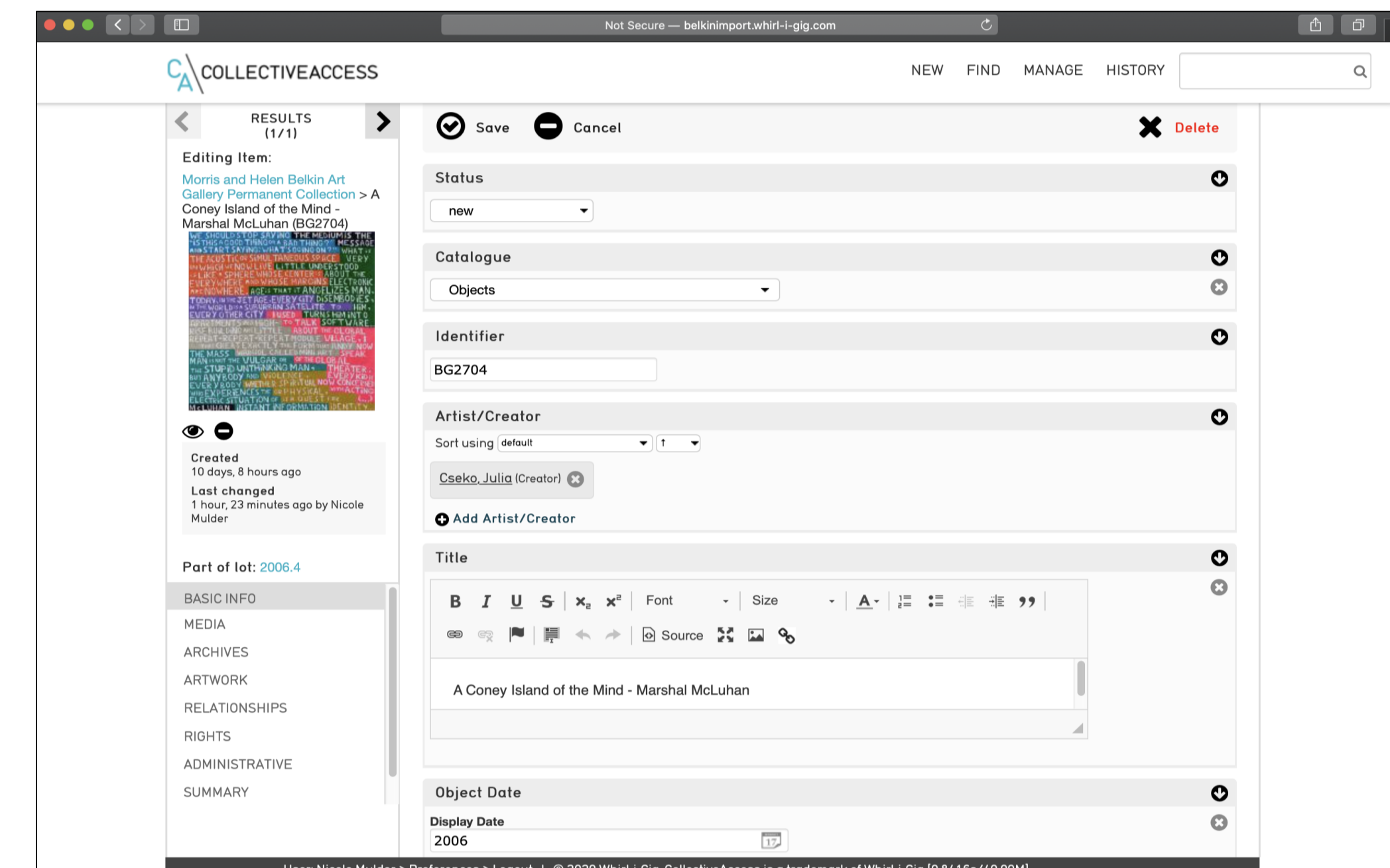


Figure 2. Prototype for the Belkin's new online collections database hosted by CollectiveAccess. Object record for Julia Csekö, *A Coney Island of the Mind – Marshal McLuhan*, 2006. Screenshot taken September 10, 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ADVICE

- Have an interest, or even a background, in contemporary art
- Create a clear communication plan with your supervisors, especially when remotely joining already-established project teams and taking on in-progress tasks
- Working in this position, you are responsible for a wide variety of projects and tasks, so be prepared to (re)prioritize and adapt quickly
- Be aware of current and upcoming programming at the Belkin, even when working remotely
- Think of a remote position in collections—a traditionally in-person position—as an opportunity to develop new digital and communication skills (you can still have meaningful conversations on Zoom!)
- Join listservs, such as those of the British Columbia Museum Association (BCMA) and Collections Stewardship Professional Network of the American Alliance of Museums (CSAAM), and look out for webinars



Figure 3. Zoom meeting with members of the Belkin's database project team. Screenshot taken September 10, 2020.