

ON EXHIBIT

An artist's guide to presenting a professional show!



The role of the curator is to acquire, care for, or develop a collection of work. Typically, they support artists based on pre-defined criteria, such as working within a specific geographic area related to their market share (for-profit) or service area (nonprofit), or a specific type of work (contemporary, postmodernism, surrealism, etc.).

Getting Noticed

Five basic ways an artist is connected to an exhibition/gallery.

- 1) The curator identified the artist when conducting prospect research online or in the community.
- 2) An artist is referred to the gallery/organization by another individual.
- 3) A call for art/artists interested in submitting work (solo or group) under a special theme or category that is announced by an organization(s).
- 4) An artist(s) contacts an organization(s) they are interested in collaborating with to solicit a show/exhibition.

TIP: Seeking an Art Exhibit

- *Ask if there is a specific process developed to receive artist information. Many organizations have an online platform to submit inquiries. However, if online submissions are not comfortable, connect in-person or by phone to identify ways to share information.*
 - *When inquiring about an art exhibition, be ready to provide an artist statement about the show, artist biography or background information; along with samples of your work (see resource links below to help write your story).*
 - o *NOTE: Curators often seek relevant and unique ideas about an exhibition concept. This could also include special partnerships in the community (see #5 below).*
 - *Consider applying for a call for art designed to meet the scope outline by the site.*
 - o *Minnesota Resources:*
 - *Forecast for Public Art: <https://forecastpublicart.org/artist-support-2-2/artist-support-2/>*
 - *Springboard for the Arts: <https://springboardforthearts.org/jobs-opportunities/overview/>*
- 5) Although not as common, a representative of the community (a non-arts organization) can work with an artist to enhance their work related to a special theme or idea. Often it is used to help educate or influence the audience in a creative way by cross-pollenating with the arts. *Examples include visualizing scientific data, enhancing community safety, sharing local and cultural stories, education about specific environmental concerns or opportunities, etc.*

Types of Artist Collaborations for Exhibitions

The work can be viewed in various galleries onsite, virtually, or in the community. Generally, there are four ways in which most galleries collaborate.

- Solo show with one artist.

- Group show with two or more artists.
- Temporary exhibit (pieces may be for sale or rent at the artist's approval).
 - o **TIP:** *Inquire if the gallery has a commission from the sale.*
 - o **Resource:**
 - <https://www.artworkarchive.com/blog/how-to-price-consistently-for-art-sales-success>
 - <https://springboardexchange.org/workofart/>
 - *Marketing section (PDF) page 48-62 in the toolkit.*
- Acquisition for a permanent collection.

Preparing to Exhibit

When selected to exhibit, the curator will seek a concept for the show by defining the message, theme, or emotion the collection is striving to deliver to the audience. This information is used to inform, educate, or inspire the public. The artist is always invited to develop this based on their unique body of work or creative process. However, staff are generally open to assisting the artist in the development process as well.

Ready to Exhibit

At the Paramount we offer opportunities to showcase two and three-dimensional artwork through temporary art exhibitions. The location is often determined by characteristics in the collection (size of individual pieces, total number of pieces, medium, and type of work).

- *NOTE: Some gallery spaces are more conducive to 3D work.*

Each item must be prepared and ready to be on display once delivered to the gallery.

TIPS: Preparing for an Exhibition

- *Arrange for your work received at the gallery. The day and time for installation (and striking) the exhibition should be set well in advance of the exhibition opening.*
- *Inform staff if special shipping needs to be arranged to determine the gallery's role in this process.*
- *Specific loading and unloading requests should be made to curator in advance of your arrival. Site pick-up and drop off may be pre-determined based on the gallery selected for the exhibition.*
- *Be mindful of how your work is boxed or secured for transport to and from the site.*
- *Discuss who will be responsible for insuring the pieces to and from the gallery, and while on display.*
- *Clean the artwork to ensure it can be viewed in its best light by dusting the piece and cleaning the glass (if applicable).*
- *Be sure each piece is label with the title, size, retail price (list NFS if not for sale). If you are providing a description - submit it in legible print or electronically.*
 - o *If you are participating in a group show, add your name to each piece on the back of the work and on the packaging.*
 - o *TIP: It is always a good idea to take quality images of your work. This can be used to secure an exhibition, uploaded in a grant request, added to your portfolio, or documentation for a sale.*
 - *Proper lighting is key.*
 - *TIP: Reduce the background noise in your image by either placing it in front of a white wall/sheet/paper to ensure your work takes center stage.*

- *Reduce glare from the glass by photographing your work prior to framing or work with a professional to reduce the glare if done afterwards.*
- *All two-dimensional work should have adequate hanging systems that are compatible with the gallery (inquire prior to delivery what system is used on site).*
 - *For a professional finish, the hanging system should not be visible when the work is on the wall.*
 - *NOTE: If you are using a wire, it should fall below the frame when hung.*
 - *The weight of the piece is important. Generally, if over 15 lbs. you should inform the curator to ensure it can be included in the exhibition.*
 - *Three-dimensional artwork will need special positioning (pillars or ledges) that can accommodate the work and ensure its safety.*

Common Terms

Exhibit refers to a display. In the art world, an artist(s) that are currently on display are involved in an exhibition or art show.

Visual art is work that can be seen or viewed in either two or three-dimensional forms. It includes drawings, paintings, sculpture, printmaking, photography, ceramics/pottery, film making, and video, along with architecture and design.

Two-dimensional art is comprised of work that is created on a flat surface and can only be observed in height and width.

Three-dimensional artwork occupies space and can be perceived/viewed from multiple sides. This work is cataloged by a height, width, and depth.

An art medium is represented by the materials use to create the art such as clay, wood, paper, oil, acrylic, fabric, charcoal, pastels, watercolor, ink, graphite/pencil, etc.

An artist statement is a written description of their work, which may include a piece, a series or their entire collection. It is specifically written to give the audience a sense of why or how the work was created.

Writing Resources:

- <https://thecreativeindependent.com/guides/how-to-write-an-artist-statement/>
- <https://www.artdex.com/what-are-great-examples-of-artist-statements/>

The artist bio provides the audience with additional information about the artist that generally summarizes their life and career up to that specific moment in time. It often includes, education, training, medium, inspirations and fun facts.

- Writing Resources:

- <https://blog.society6.com/write-the-perfect-artist-bio-with-these-five-simple-tips/>
- <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-an-artist-bio>