

Art at the Library

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How to Propose a Show at the Library: A Guide

The Miami-Dade Public Library System accepts proposals for exhibitions, performance art, and site-specific installations in all media. This guide includes information on how to submit a proposal as well as the exhibition process.

The Library system's exhibition program includes contemporary art, material culture, folk art, and art education (for example, exhibitions of student work organized by teachers or other educators), as well as exhibitions in the humanities about literary, historical, cultural, and interdisciplinary topics.

We welcome a diverse variety of proposals in all media. We look for proposals of high quality that demonstrate thoughtful consideration of the library environment as a public space. Adaptability and flexibility are great qualities for any artist, curator, or group exhibiting at the Library.

The Library also evaluates proposals with an eye for projects/exhibitions that

- get viewers to see things in new ways
- address themes that are relevant to a specific local community in an innovative way
- present traditional art forms that are rooted in a particular culture, place, or history
- experiment with new forms, **and/or**
- relate to language and literary themes, library collections, or the library as a site.

If you have previously exhibited at the Library, you must wait until a minimum of two years have passed since your last exhibition before submitting another proposal.

Locations

The Miami-Dade Public Library System has 50 branches. Artists and others may propose exhibitions or projects for a specific library in the system, but **the Library reserves the right to select the final location based on availability, space constraints, and other factors.** Most applicants request Main Library. Be flexible. Be aware that exhibiting in a regional or neighborhood branch often offers the opportunity for a lot of visibility and even more engagement with the community.

Exhibitions will generally take place at the [Main Library](#) (in the auditorium, the 1st floor exhibition space, and the 2nd floor exhibition space, which lends itself to site-specific work). Other exhibition spaces may include:

- [West Dade Regional Library](#)
- [North Dade Regional Library](#)
- [South Dade Regional Library](#)
- [Hispanic Branch Library](#)

You may also propose a project or exhibition for a smaller branch as well. If your work or project is site-specific or community-specific, we suggest you visit the branch you have in mind before developing your proposal. You can find a full list of branch locations at mdpls.org/locator/map.html

Time Frame

If you propose a certain time frame, Library staff will work with you to schedule an exhibition period that is mutually agreeable. Exhibitions can last anywhere from a minimum of 6 weeks to several months. The Library system often schedules exhibitions to coincide with yearly themes and programs including Hispanic Heritage, Black History, Asian-Pacific American Heritage, Summer Reading, and others.

About Art Services And Exhibitions At The Miami-Dade Public Library System

The Miami-Dade Public Library System's Art Services and Exhibitions Department curates a year-round program of exhibitions, performances, lectures, panel discussions, and community art projects. All of these are free and open to the public. The Library began exhibiting work by local and international artists in 1963.

Art Services maintains a [permanent collection of over 2,000 works of art](#). The collection includes works on paper, photographs, artists' books, and small sculptures, with a focus on Miami artists. The collection is installed throughout nearly all of the 49 library branches in the system. The Library began collecting original works of art, prints, and posters in 1970.

Additionally, the [Vasari Project](#) is an archive, founded in 2000, that documents the development of the visual arts in Miami-Dade County since 1945. It contains correspondence, press clippings, photographs, oral histories and other materials. The public may access both of these collections for research and reference. These are also resources you can use when researching or curating a project or exhibition.

How To Submit An Exhibition Proposal

Submit all paper materials paper-clipped together, and not in a binder or in plastic page protectors.

Exhibitions are considered on a rolling basis.

Submit the following:

1. A **cover letter** including:
 - Name(s) of participating artist(s), curator(s) or organization(s)
 - Contact information including name, address, phone number(s), and email address
 - A description of or statement about the exhibition or project, the themes and/or materials to be used, and, if applicable, any ideas or plans you might have for supplementary programs. If applicable, mention any resources you may have already secured or will be seeking in support of the exhibition or project (i.e. printing of catalogues, funding for special materials, etc.).
 - A proposed time frame
 - A proposed location, if desired
2. **Work samples:** Submit a set of up to 10 representative high-quality photographic prints or 150 dpi jpegs for each artist in the exhibition. If your project involves a large group of students or community participants, you may include up to 25 representative images for the whole group.

You may also submit video (10 minutes maximum) on DVD for work samples of media art, performance, and installation.

Label **all** work samples with your name and a number. **Include a checklist** identifying each work sample along with title, name of artist, date, medium, dimensions, and insurance values. For media art or performance, include names of the artist(s) involved, title, date, duration, and a brief description of the work.

3. **A resume or bio** for each artist, **or up to one page of background information on the program or organization** if your proposal is on behalf of a community-based or educational program.
4. **Support materials** including newspaper articles, reviews, previous exhibition catalogues, etc.

We regret that we will not be able to review your proposal if you do not include all of the above.

Mail to:

Exhibition Proposals
Art Services and Exhibitions
Miami-Dade Public Library System
101 W. Flagler Street
Miami, FL 33130

Or email art@mdpls.org with "Exhibition Proposal" in the subject heading.

Once you have reviewed the guidelines and information, call 305.375.5599 or email art@mdpls.org if you have any questions.

The Exhibition Process

An exhibition committee reviews all proposals for quality of exhibition content and execution, consistency with Art Services' curatorial scope and program, consistency with the mission and activities of the Library, and feasibility in terms of scheduling, budget, and logistics.

Exhibiting work at the Miami-Dade Public Library System is a collaborative process between Library staff and the artist(s), curator(s), and/or organizer of the exhibition.

If your proposal is selected, the Library may provide:

- Exhibition space and lighting
- Insurance of all work and materials in the exhibition
- Installation of the work (artists/organizers may be asked to assist with installation)
- Exhibition/display cases if needed
- A moderate level of security. All libraries have security guards on premises, but do not have dedicated exhibition/gallery attendants.
- Labels and signage
- Assistance with any necessary research
- The creation of a bibliography and book display to accompany the exhibition/performance
- Promotion through placement in the Library's monthly program guide and web calendar
- Distribution of promotional materials and email announcements
- A modest amount of materials and supplies (including mounting and presentation supplies, Plexiglas, wood, paint, and possibly other materials as necessary). There are a limited amount of frames available for work that needs it, but preference is given to work that is already framed.

Once an exhibition is scheduled, the exhibiting artist(s) or group must be able to provide:

- All necessary materials, information, insurance values, and artwork by set deadlines.
- Images and information for press/promotional purposes must be sent to Art Services staff up to three months before the opening date of an exhibition.
- You may need to provide for the transportation of the work or materials for display to and from the library.
- You or your group will need to provide or seek outside support for the printing of exhibition announcement cards or invitations and exhibition catalogs, if desired.

Library exhibition spaces may not be used for commercial or political purposes, for the solicitation of business, for profit or for fundraising. The Library cannot engage in the sale of any artwork displayed in an exhibition, or provide pricing information within the exhibition.

Please note that, if your proposal is accepted, you may need to modify the proposal/exhibition plans based on unforeseen changes in funding, availability of space, and other factors