

Call for Art Procedure Guidelines

A *Call for Art* is an invitation designed to inform and entice artists into submitting a personal piece of qualifying art for display and possible award.

Organizations planning a public or private art display can find themselves needing to know a lot about this process; however, they may not have the expertise or resources to perform all the necessary steps. Members of the Visual Arts Commission have been approached for such guidance and as a result, decided to outline the steps they have taken when on similar committees.

Steps

- 1) Identify the Project
- 2) Define and Identify Target Participants/ Artists
- 3) Develop the Call for Art Document Request for Proposal (RFP)
- 4) Distribute the Call for Art Document Request for Proposal (RFP) Information
- 5) Select Jurors from the Jury Pool
- 6) Check Candidate References
- 7) Contact Final Candidates
- 8) Define Target Audience
- 9) Promote Dedication of Art Event(s)

Establish Resource Needs

The *Call for Art* process is an integral part of ensuring a successful event. Oftentimes, it is the first formal communication between the committee and the potential artists to kick off the event. The document can be time-consuming along with being expensive to print and mail, so ensure that it has all the needed details. Proofread!

Define Target Participants/Artists

Determine what skill set is necessary for your event. Remember that niches and special skills are impressive and unique; however, setting your sights on such specifics will limit the number of available participants/artists. To attract a larger participant group, you may have to be more generic in your identification process.

Develop the *Call for Art* Document

Be sure to include enough information in the form so the artist has a good feel for what is needed. Be thorough and as direct as possible so little time is wasted by both parties. If additional information is available, yet is too detailed and is not included in the *Call for Art*, make sure to provide some sort of reference. A website can be a very useful tool for additional information and additional documents.

Details to include should cover four main topics: Event description, organizational overview, requirements/deliverables, and application.

Event Description

- Brief introduction of event
- Date
- Location
- Award date
- Prize/purse

Organizational Overview

- Organization responsible for event
- Contact information
- Reference materials and tools

Requirements/Deliverables

- **Assumptions:** Travel costs, postage costs
- **Art Specifications:** Dimensions, materials, value, asking price
- **Artist Information:** Resume, references
- **Submission Specifications:** Deadline, ship to address
- Judging/Review
- Future Communication/Follow-Up

Application

- **Request for Personal Information:** Name, address, city, state, zip, phone, and email
- Agreement section with line for signature and date

Identify Target Participants/Artists

Use a wide array of tools to ensure success. The phone book and Internet are perfect examples of valuable tools. Look for information on local, regional, and national art councils, museums, and universities to name just a few. Many of these groups will provide names of artists who have volunteered to be added to certain lists.

Contact Potential Artists with *Call for Art* Information

Determine the best way to inform the artist of the *Call for Art* information. If mailing, be sure to establish a drop date so the information is available in a timely manner.

Contact Potential Jurors

Ensure that the judges, jurors, and panelists are aware of expectations and the time needed to commit to the process. Similar actions when defining a target artist should be followed, as you will want a clear understanding of the skills and experience needed to make fair and sound awarding decisions.

Check References

References should be required and checked for all artists and jurors prior to selection.

Contact Final Candidates

Contact final candidates and ensure they are made aware of their status and communicate any remaining expectations. If they need to be present at an awards ceremony or art show, discuss dates, times, location, expectations, and expenses. Remember to also communicate to all candidates who did not make it to the final round.

Define Target Audience

Determine who will be receiving an invitation.

Advertise Event

Advertising is a critical factor for success. Understand and determine how to best share your message. There are many channels available which all carry different costs. Plan a budget that is appropriate for your event.

Keep in Mind

Distribute the *Call for Art*

Send out your *Call for Art* eight to 16 weeks before your requested submission date. Creating a work of art takes time; give potential artists time to think about their submission, determine the cost to participate, and respond to your *Call for Art*.

- Distribute the *Call for Art* to identified target artists.
- Do not send your *Call for Art* to artists/participants who do not have the needed qualifications/skills.
- Do not send out a *Call for Art* if there is any chance the event will be cancelled.

Answer Questions

Avail yourself and/or other tools to answer questions about what is expected. You do not have to answer questions which are not covered in the *Call for Art* document.

Set Clear Judging/Awards Criteria

Artists/participants are investing their personal time and money to meet project requirements and deserve to be treated professionally. Being indecisive about judging criteria or awarding a prize to someone who doesn't meet those criteria can make you and your organization look like amateurs. Outline your approach prior to sending out the *Call for Art* document. Be specific and stick to any established criteria.

Keep Artists Informed of Project Milestones

Telling someone that they did not win is never pleasant. Take time to communicate with each artist who submitted a piece and give each artist a critique of their proposal. This will help the artist to do a better job next time, and to be more competitive in the future when you ask them to respond to a future proposal.