

Best Practice for Artists and Publicly Funded Galleries

SECTION A.3

TYPES OF EXHIBITIONS IN PUBLICLY FUNDED GALLERIES

There are many different types of exhibitions that a not for profit publicly funded gallery might initiate or host. The following briefly describes these, including whether and by what mechanism work might be selected for display; whether current practice is to pay artist fees or not; and whether work might be sold from the exhibition.

If you can assist in developing these descriptions, please do so. Your input is welcome.

A.3.1 Curated Exhibition

Definition for this project: *An exhibition organised by the gallery, or on loan from another gallery, or organised by a freelance curator, that explores a specific theme or practice and involves the display of work by one or more artists or craft practitioners.*

A curator or team of curators, or an individual or group empowered to judge the merit of the work, always selects the work. The work is usually already in existence, or artists/craft practitioners may be invited to create work for selection into the exhibition. Curated exhibitions may be toured by the originating gallery to one or more other galleries.

All four sectors of the publicly funded galleries curate exhibitions. These may be an:

- international, national or local survey show of contemporary work
- exhibition based on a specific genre or practice
- exhibition of a particular artist's or craft practitioner's work.

Work in a curated exhibition may or may not be for sale by the gallery.

Artists and craft practitioners are normally paid a loan fee for the use of their work in the exhibition, as well as other fees for associated services such as artist talks, workshops, screenings, specific promotional appearances, interstate travel costs, etc.

A.3.2 Commissioned Exhibition

Definition for this project: *An exhibition similar to curated exhibitions, except that in these exhibitions, the originating gallery commissions some or all of the work to be created by the artist/s or craft practitioner/s specifically for the exhibition, and meets much of the cost burden of doing so.*

This is particularly true of new media and installation work or particularly large and ambitious pieces.

All four sectors of the publicly funded galleries may commission exhibitions, but these are much more likely to be found in the larger galleries with sufficient budgets to meet the additional costs involved.

Work/s are not usually for sale. Depending on the type and scale of the work commissioned, the exhibition may be toured by the originating gallery to one or more other galleries.

Artists and craft practitioners are normally paid a fee that includes remuneration for materials, labour, freight and installation as well as associated fees as above.

A.3.3 Exhibition of Student, or Emerging Artist's, or Emerging Craft Practitioner's Work

State galleries, regional galleries, contemporary art organisations and centres for craft and design all mount or host exhibitions of the work of graduating students, or of student work addressing a particular theme, as well as the work of emerging artists and craft practitioners – usually defined as recent graduates within the first five years of their practice, or below a particular age cut off point.

These exhibitions may be curated to display the most talented of a new cohort of artists or craft practitioners. However in some cases the gallery merely provides a venue for an exhibition of work that has been selected by teachers, or by another individual or group empowered to judge the merit of work, or type of work, submitted.

The exhibition may be toured by the originating gallery or by the originating organisation to one or more other galleries.

Works in these exhibitions may or may not be for sale.

In some cases, artists and craft practitioners are paid a token fee for the use of their work, on other cases no fees are paid.

A.3.4 Exhibition Proposed by an Artist or Craft Practitioner (or Group) or Professional Art or Craft Organisation

Regional galleries, contemporary art organisations and centres for craft and design accept exhibition proposals and call for these on a yearly or more frequent basis. The national or state art galleries never use this mechanism.

Proposals put to the gallery may be reviewed by a curator or team of curators, or by an individual or group empowered to judge the type of work submitted. Sometimes these exhibitions may be toured, in which case the host gallery may assist with organising the touring details.

Work on exhibition may or may not be for sale.

Artists and craft practitioners may or may not be paid a fee, depending on a number of factors including: whether the gallery accepts the proposal as part of its own programming; whether grant funding has been obtained to support the project; and whether the exhibition includes work for sale.

In some cases, work is displayed in a for-hire section of the gallery with limited support by the venue. In these cases, no fee is paid.

A.3.5 Art or Craft Prize, Award or Competition

Definition for this project: *An exhibition resulting from a specifically advertised opportunity for artists or craft practitioners to place their work in a competitive situation in which there may be one or more monetary prizes or awards, with or without acquisition by the gallery of the work.*

This type of exhibition is a common mechanism used by some galleries to acquire works for their collection, with the acquisitive prize funds donated by sponsors or benefactors.

All sectors of publicly funded galleries either host or initiate prize or award competitions.

The work displayed in these exhibitions may be selected by a curator, a team of curators, or by an individual or group empowered to judge the merit of work submitted (for instance, a Board of Trustees or invited arts professionals). However in other cases, all works submitted are exhibited and there is no selection process.

Works are usually for sale. The exhibition may be toured by the originating gallery to one or more other galleries.

Current practice is that artists and craft practitioners are not usually paid a fee, unless the competition requires artists or craft practitioners to meet a particular brief, or where large and expensive works are to be created, in which case competition organisers may meet some fabrication and transportation costs plus a fee.

A.3.6 Exhibition Proposed by Community Groups

Many regional galleries have a community access policy that provides opportunities for local community groups to display their work in the gallery. These groups may be members of a local art or craft guild or society, a regional arts council, a youth arts project or similar.

The work in these exhibitions is not usually selected, and no fees are paid.

The gallery may provide some financial and in-kind support, or, the work may be displayed in a for-hire section of the gallery. Work may or may not be for sale.

A.3.7 Fundraising Exhibition

Regional galleries, contemporary art organisations and centres for craft and design may agree to host an exhibition to specifically raise funds for one or more charitable purposes. Work may be solicited from specific artists, and/or derive from an open invitation. The gallery may initiate and administer the exhibition or it may be another organisation.

In these exhibitions work is always for sale with the artists and craft practitioners making a contribution from the proceeds of sales.

No fees are paid.

A.3.8 Virtual Exhibition

Some publicly funded galleries may provide links to sites where further work by exhibiting artists or craft practitioners may be seen as an extension of a current exhibition.

Other galleries and/or artist organisations may host entire virtual exhibitions without a venue at all.

Work in virtual exhibitions is not usually for sale. Fees may or may not be paid depending on whether the virtual work is associated with or consists of a curated exhibition.