

Art Selection Guidelines

Role of the Art Selection Committee

As visitors and staff move throughout a building, they develop a sense of its art. When your art collection reflects a single, clear point-of-view, their image of the building will be favorable – even if the art is not to their taste.

When your building's art manifests multiple points-of-view, it undermines the impact of all the art – even when certain departments have an excellent presentation.

Thus most Art Committees soon decide to address the overriding **esthetics of their whole building complex** in order to properly do their art job.

Further, **all wall furnishings must be considered** – since bulletin boards, vacation photos, calendars, and taped-up telephone lists... will be competing for your art's wall space.

Therefore, all our discussions assume that the Art Committee is functioning as the **Esthetic Committee**, and that this committee will function for the **whole** building.

Mission

All Committee guidelines must pass a test for **consistency with an overriding mission**.

We recommend that this mission be identified first, **before any discussion of detailed guidelines** occurs. This will save hours of demoralizing debate further on.

The Mission Statement answers three or four fundamental questions:

- **Why art in the setting** at all? (Shouldn't we give everybody a raise instead?)
- **Who** is the Art for? (My boss's spouse, my peers, my competitors, my visitors, my clients, my staff...?)
- **Who should be represented** on the Art Committee itself?
- What are your **criteria for success** for each group? What types of **psychological impact** are we hoping for? What **interior design** impact...?

The most successful version of this statement is the chief **Executive's** Mission Statement. It will serve as a guide for all subsequent Art Committee work.

Committee Process

Once the Committee is properly configured and the Executive Mission Statement delineated, responsibilities are assigned to subcommittees. A specific Art Selection project is essential to help work out policies and guidelines for the whole.

Budget

Hard and fast budgeting is difficult, but some guidelines must be developed in order to avoid wasting time on expensive options that will never be approved.

Expert Guide

The next part of the process will need the help of an Expert Guide. The groups identified in the Mission Statement will have **conflicting needs** and the Committee will benefit from an expert with no vested interest in particular groups, nor in the internal politics of the organization.

It will normally need to be an Art Consultant, one with the vision to understand how to implement the Mission, ensure a rich mix of themes, and help find the middle way among conflicting needs.

Needs assessment

Where do we need the art, in what sizes? How many pieces in each size?

Usually we walk the building (if possible) then mark and number each location on a floor plan. Then we get an agreement on the locations by the full committee. We also identify possible locations for the reuse of existing art.

Media: we now identify: which pieces are to be Fine Art, which are to be prints, where silk flowers or plants are to be located, and which items will need a budget for special lighting.

From our Preliminary Budget, we can now judge how much is available for each piece.

At this point we readjust our number of pieces, their locations, and often, even the budget. Sometimes it is appropriate to phase the work over two or three years.

Art Selection Process

We recommend a two-step process:

- First, we identify the preferences of each participant in an **Art Preferences** meeting.

Then, the **Art Expert** reviews the preferences, identifies the areas of consensus, and selects a specific image (in the correct size) for each **Art Location** (along with alternates).

The **Designer and the Committee Chair** review this, and adjustments are made if needed. At this point, they work with the Expert to develop a timeless group of **frames** to be the Building Standard Frames and the Executive Standard Frames. Standards are also provided for the **mats**. **Installation** requirements are identified.

- Second, we have an **Art Selection** meeting for all the participants (often a separate meeting for each department or floor).

Each location is numbered on the plan. Then **all the images** are numbered with their location number, and **laid out** around a big conference table with the floor plan in the center. (A lot of time is saved if all the art can be selected for all the phases in one meeting.)

The **participants** review the presentation and then work with the Expert to make any adjustments needed. Often the adjustments can be made on the spot, from the alternates presented.

The Expert then makes a **proposal** for each phase, including **packing, shipping and professional installation**.

Installation

Installation is scheduled immediately after the furniture is installed. If there is more than one vendor for the art, there will need to be a provision for receiving inspection.

Follow-up

Immediately, after installation, the Committee should issue their **wall furnishing standards** and requirements to insure that the there is no degradation of the new look.