Hamilton Public Library

Exhibitions Strategy

Purpose

To explain the goals and scope of exhibitions at Hamilton Public Library (HPL). The strategy also explains the process for selecting and curating exhibitions.

Scope

This strategy includes exhibitions that are free-standing, in exhibit cases or windows, attached to walls, and attached to exhibit panels owned by HPL.

This strategy does not include

- traditional library book displays
- promotional cube displays created by Library staff

Key Points Summary

The Exhibitions Strategy outlines

- the philosophy and goals of HPL's exhibition program and activities
- the criteria for selecting and curating exhibitions
- the roles responsible for managing exhibitions and exhibition spaces

Definitions

Displays are a selection of items or material chosen for visual appeal, timeliness, or topical relevance. They have little to no accompanying interpretive text. Displays require less preparation than exhibitions and are on view for a shorter time.

Exhibitions/Exhibits are a selection of curated items or material paired with textual, visual, or auditory content like descriptions and interpretation. They are focused on a similar idea, theme, or narrative and arranged to engage the viewer. These research

and creative endeavors require extensive preparation and are often on view for several months.

Exhibitors may include artists, makers, artisans, organizations, guilds, cultural groups, collectors, and City of Hamilton working groups and departments.

Interpretation is an educational activity to show meaning rather than simply communicate information. It combines original objects, firsthand experience, and illustrative media. Interpretation connects tangible artifacts, collections, or material to the intangible concepts they represent.

Strategy Details

Exhibitions in the Library

Hamilton Public Library creates, chooses, and runs exhibitions that add to a welcoming library environment, create visual enrichment, and provide educational and cultural experiences. Exhibitions are a valuable part of public service, outreach, and programming. As a non-traditional exhibition space, HPL carefully considers the impact exhibitions may have on library operations. The Library is a unique setting that supports the opportunities for learning and discovery created by exhibitions. The Manager, Local History and Archives and the Exhibition and Outreach Coordinator are responsible for choosing exhibitions or delegating authority to a selection jury in some circumstances.

Exhibitions at HPL will

- align with the vision, mission, values, and strategic priorities of HPL
- provide opportunities for learning, enjoyment, and lifelong discovery
- be accessible for visitors of all ages and abilities
- consider the Library member or visitor in their creation and implementation
- be of a quality that ensures accuracy, relevance to the community, and effective communication

Exhibitions at Hamilton Public Library (HPL) may be created

- by HPL staff
- in collaboration with community partners and organizations
- in collaboration with educational and cultural institutions
- in collaboration with guest curators
- by external exhibitors

Internally curated and HPL co-planned exhibitions have precedence over external exhibitions.

Types of Exhibitions

Types of exhibitions may include, but are not limited to

Artistic Exhibitions (Professional)

- HPL considers exhibitions of original artwork created by professional artists and artisans at any level of their career.
- Exhibitions will present a series of artworks with a cohesive vision.
- HPL follows CARFAC recommended rates A.1.6 Exhibitions in Other Public Places.
- All artwork must be complete before applying.

Artistic Exhibitions (Community or Educational Organizations and Institutions)

- HPL considers exhibitions of craft, art projects, or artworks created in formal and informal educational settings or funded through external organizations.
- HPL does not pay fees for art exhibits created by community or educational organizations and institutions.
- Library partners or exhibitions of artwork created as part of a Library program will have precedence.

Traveling Interpretive Exhibitions (Organized by External Institutions)

- HPL considers exhibitions that have a didactic or informational purpose created by reputable organizations.
- All interpretive elements must be complete before applying.

Co-planned Exhibitions

- HPL considers exhibition proposals that offer the opportunity for meaningful collaboration, increase the understanding of and engagement with library or archival collections and services, and contribute to the awareness of the Library as a cultural institution.
- Library partners will take precedence, following HPL's Working with Us Policy.

Application Process

Exhibit applications must be submitted through the Application Form. Applications that do not provide all the required information will not be considered. We thank all potential exhibitors for their application, however Hamilton Public Library doesn't have the resources to host all exhibitions or to contact all applicants. All exhibitions are subject to the Conditions of Exhibitions, as amended from time to time, and detailed in a formal contract or memorandum of understanding before final approval.

Selection Criteria

There are several criteria considered when curating and selecting an exhibition.

- Alignment with Hamilton Public Library's (HPL) mission and values
- Representation of diverse interests of the community
- Relevance to HPL's activities, programs, and collections
- Prioritization of content, stories, or exhibitors from Hamilton and area
- Clear and defined outcomes
- Opportunity for community engagement, education, programming
- Availability and suitability of the space
- Capacity of staff and availability of resources

- Suitability for the public library environment

Exhibition Considerations and Limitations

- An exhibition is a single occurrence and doesn't imply the right to repeat exhibits.
- Artistic exhibitions aren't the main focus of the Library and exhibitors looking for a professional venue will be directed to other Hamilton gallery spaces.
- Exhibitions are unsupervised and accessible to the public during the Library's open hours. The Library reserves the right to adjust or alter the way an exhibition is displayed if necessary for library operations.
- HPL strives to work collaboratively with exhibitors to maintain the integrity of exhibits; however, the Library reserves the right to alter, move, cancel, and/or remove an exhibit that violates library policies.
- HPL reserves the right to refuse to display items or exhibitions inappropriate for a library environment or that include advertisements, solicitations for recruitment, business, or fundraising.
- Exhibitions that break federal, provincial, or municipal laws won't be accepted.

Intellectual Freedom

HPL has a responsibility to support the right of intellectual freedom and expression by implementing it consistently when developing and hosting programs, events, and exhibits within library spaces. The presence of an exhibition or item within an exhibition isn't an endorsement of its contents by HPL but rather is an affirmation of the principle of intellectual freedom.

Related Documents

Working With Us Policy

Intellectual Freedom Policy

Local History and Archives Policy