

EXHIBITIONS/PUBLIC ART OVERVIEW

On behalf of the City of Tallahassee, COCA oversees the implementation, marketing, promotion, delivery and quality of the **Art in Public Places** program, products, and services. COCA staff manages three public gallery spaces, in City Hall and the Tallahassee International Airport. COCA also coordinates the calls to artists, exhibition prospectuses, collection of applications, artwork submissions, jurying, judging, and selection of artwork for a dozen or more rotating exhibitions, annually, including several special group exhibitions. The Exhibition Manager coordinates and confirms the volunteer selection committee, works to ensure the success of the exhibits and maintenance of galleries, performs the duties of a registrar and maintains forms, contracts, documents and files associated with cataloguing and loans, permanent collections, insurance and storage of artwork; organizes transportation of artwork to and from ArtPort and City Hall galleries; performs the duties of a curator and designs individual exhibits; performs the duties of a preparator and installs the exhibitions in a safe and professional manner; oversees the creation of labels, catalogs, posters, press releases, etc., publicly promotes each exhibit and coordinates public receptions in both galleries, if necessary, and administers an exhibition evaluation survey to gather artist feedback about the process.

COCA's Art in Public Places program is often used as a starting point for artists' exhibition careers. Each year more than **350 professional and emerging artists apply** to exhibit through COCA's Art in Public Places program, submitting more than 750 individual pieces of artwork for consideration. Based on recommendations from volunteer art advisory committees, more than 250 artists are invited to exhibit in more than 12-14 rotating exhibitions. Over the course of a year, COCA hosts more than 2,000 guests at exhibit receptions and collects more than 1,500 signatures and comments in exhibit guestbooks. These signatures typically represent gallery goers from more than 30 different states and more than 12 different countries.

Technical assistance is provided by COCA which allows artists to learn how to share their point of view with a larger audience. For professional success, it is imperative that artists understand how to present their artwork to a jury or potential buyers; collaborate with a curator; and work within specific restrictions of program policies and the confines of a display space. Multiple times each week, individual artists approach COCA for advice about portfolio preparations, photographing artwork, sales and exhibition opportunities, pricing structures, artist statements, web-based marketing opportunities, and artwork display feedback. Through these one-on-one sessions, they gain insights and can use the information and skills they've acquired to find success in many other artistic arenas.

COCA produces an **informative exhibition catalog** for each exhibit which includes easily accessible information about the artist, the techniques and media used, and the art pieces themselves as well as a discussion about what the exhibit represents.

COCA periodically hosts **gallery talks** and artist lectures for college students and professors, senior citizens, and school children in the gallery spaces. These discussions focus on a variety of topics including the artists' background, inspirations, creative process, methods, and techniques.

COCA designs a unique **Art Exhibit Treasure Hunt** that is specific to each exhibition in both the City Hall and Artport galleries. These treasure hunts are entertaining and educational for children and parents alike. Aesthetic and art criticism questions are posed that encourage young people and adults to use critical thinking skills and analytical strategies while viewing an exhibit. This exercise fosters a dialog

between adults and children about art.

As part of the Art in Public Places program, COCA oversees and maintains the **City's permanent art collection** which consists of more than 75 pieces of original artwork by local and regional artists. These artworks are located within public buildings as well as in outdoor locations.

In 2015, COCA created the **Mayor's Purchase Prize** to expand the permanent collection and reflect the artworks that are currently being created by our local artists.

Additionally, COCA is often asked by various City departments, community groups, local organizations, and businesses to advise on and oversee **special projects and public art initiatives** throughout the area.

COCA's **Outdoor Public Art Directory** is a comprehensive listing of more than 200 public sculptures, murals, windows, memorials, and monuments which have been cataloged along with information, images, links to artist websites. COCA regularly updates this guide which offers a view of the iconic, historic, and quirky works of art that enhance Tallahassee's natural beauty. It includes outdoor public art from City, County, and state/university collections as well as corporate and community artworks. A companion Google map was specially designed by COCA, and it allows users to explore outdoor public artworks in an interactive way. This guide serves to educate residents and visitors alike about the wealth of outdoor public art we have in the city. Local teachers use the guide as part of their curriculum and there are numerous opportunities to discuss the cross curricular applications of this resource.

To highlight the outdoor public artworks in our community, COCA designed the **Downtown Public Art Walk** and the **All-Saints Public Art Walk**. These routes each feature more than 30 artworks, promote a healthy lifestyle, and offer residents and visitors the opportunity to experience and appreciate our outdoor public art. COCA also created an interactive map that links artworks along the route with detailed information and images on COCA Outdoor Public Art Directory. COCA staff provides guided art walks for school and community groups.

COCA's web-based **Artist Directory** highlights more than 900 local visual, performing, and literary artists. Images and contact information are included so that visitors can not only see the wide variety of talent in our community, but they can also purchase artwork or hire professional services from artists. This is a valuable promotional and marketing tool for artists. COCA updates the directory regularly and new artists are added weekly.

Each year, 15-20 local visual artists are featured through **COCA Sunday profile articles** in the *Tallahassee Democrat*. These articles represent a diversity of artists working in a variety of artistic mediums. Artists gain a great deal of exposure from these articles and the public gains a greater understanding about practicing artists in the community.

COCA continues our weekly television spot called "**COCA Connection**" on **WTXL**. It airs each Thursday and highlights arts and culture in the community. Each segment features an artist associated with an area event, including COCA hosted public art exhibits.