Why Artwork might not be accepted for an Exhibit

There are many factors in considering what artwork is accepted for an exhibit from practical reasons to suitability for the venue’s audience. The main ones are: gallery capacity, adherence to the Art Center’s Exhibit Guidelines, for themed exhibits, does the work follow the theme. Here are some of the (mostly) behind the scenes operations that occur when putting an exhibit together.

1. Gallery size vs number of artworks submitted. i.e. we know from experience that the Meadows Gallery will comfortably handle 80 – 100 2-Dimensional pieces. Anything less than 80 makes the exhibit look sparse & anything above 100 will look crowded together. We have some really popular exhibits each year, like our annual National Dimension Exhibit, that receive well over 100 artworks submissions. If there is a juror selecting the exhibit, when we send them the link to the images, we instruct them that they need to select 80 – 100 2-D pieces. The logistics for 3-Dimensional works has more latitude, as it usually isn’t decided on the basis of available wall space. After the juror has made their selection or if there is no juror, the Art Center will review the artwork for audience suitability and then acceptance/declination notifications go out to all of the entrants.
2. Theme – If the call for entry is, for example, Landscapes, artwork submitted is reviewed to ensure that it matches the theme.
3. Does it adhere to the Art Center’s Exhibit Guideline? The Exhibit Guidelines are on our website under the “For Artists” tab. The very first statement is “The Art Center has the right to reject or refuse any work for any reason” and under the heading “Artwork Guidelines” it states “Artwork must be suitable for public exhibition. The Art Center reserves the right to refuse to accept any artwork for any reason” In all of our Calls for Entry that we post to our website, there is an imbedded link to these Exhibit Guidelines & it states in the call for entry that by submitting an entry, the artist is agreeing to abide by all of these terms. Most artwork that is not accepted during intake is usually because of hanging requirements i.e. there is no hanging wire on a 2 Dimensional piece. If time will allow the artist is able to correct the issue so that the piece may still be included in the exhibit.
4. Are there any restrictions on subject matter? In some cases there are, i.e. nudity. As a past/current/future applicant & recipient of grants from the Texas Commission for the Arts, we are required to follow the Texas Statutes on Obscenity. “By execution of this contract the Service Provider assures and certifies that it will comply with the Commission’s

enabling legislation, Texas Government Code, chapter 444.

[Texas Government Code, Section 444.021(b)](https://texas.public.law/statutes/tex._gov%27t_code_section_444.021) prohibits the Texas Commission on the Arts and its grantees from knowingly fostering, encouraging, promoting or funding any project, production, workshop and/or program which includes obscene material as defined in [Section 43.21, Penal Code of Texas](https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/PE/htm/PE.43.htm).” Basically if the figure is anatomically correct and there is nothing sexual about the piece then the artwork is allowed at the Art Center.

1. Does it adhere to the Art Center Code of Conduct (see attached) or is the artwork divisive in nature? The Art Center is a community based, family friendly, and inclusive environment which does not condone or tolerate bullying, harassment, slander, any form of discrimination, etc.
2. Is the artwork legal? i.e. Copyright infringement is not allowed. We have also had a game warden come in and dismantle an artist’s sculpture in an exhibit because it included found objects such as bird nests, broken eggs, feathers, etc. We learned at that time that it is illegal to have these items in your possession because of federal migratory bird protections. As a result we added the information to our Exhibit Guidelines so our artists can make informed decisions on natural art before submitting it.

Most of this happens behind the scenes & no one else is aware. Only the artist receives the acceptance/declination emails that get sent out and no specific reason is given about why it was declined. We do not want to discourage artists from creating their own personal artwork. We do not publicize that specific artwork has been declined. Unfortunately, sometimes the images we receive are so small that we cannot always tell exactly what the piece is depicting so an artist receives a notice that their piece has been accepted; however, during intake it becomes apparent that the piece cannot be included in the exhibit.

It is impossible to cover all situations in one document, so this list should not be considered completely comprehensive. We understand that a lot of time and care goes into creating art and we encourage everyone in their endeavors; unfortunately there are some limitations on what is suitable for our venue’s audience.