

Middleton Public Library

EXHIBIT & DISPLAY POLICY

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I. Purpose

- (A) **EXHIBIT.** Exhibits are a method for presenting and interpreting a wide variety of visual material, such as photographs, artwork, sculpture, and other two and three dimensional material. Exhibits include, but are not limited to: displays, galleries, public art, murals, sculptures, or interpretive exhibits. They may be presented in physical spaces and/or online in a virtual environment. Exhibits may be developed by the Library, community organizations, or library users.

These guidelines establish a framework for developing exhibitions and collections that align with the library's mission. The purpose is to offer the Middleton community a wide array of artwork and exhibits that represent the community's various perspectives, expressions, opinions and interests. The Middleton Public Library adheres to the principles of intellectual freedom, adopted by the American Library Association, as expressed in the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read, and the Freedom to View Statements that support:

1. Enhancing community appreciation of the arts.
2. Presenting exhibitions of educational and/or historical significance.
3. Providing library visitors an opportunity to develop critical thinking and a deeper understanding of original artworks.
4. Assisting local and regional artists to broaden their impact, while remaining open to exhibits by national and international artists.
5. Inviting local groups, schools and individuals to make use of exhibit spaces.

- (B) **DISPLAY.** The primary function of the bulletin boards, display case, and brochure racks located in public areas, is to provide information to library users about events or services of an educational, cultural, or community nature.

II. Authority

- (A) Application of these guidelines will be based on the judgment of the Library Director and Art Gallery Committee. Requests that do not fall clearly within these guidelines may be authorized only if they are deemed to be in the best interest of the library.

III. Priorities and Guidelines

- (A) Priority is given to tax-supported agencies and to community organizations with which the library carries out cooperative programs, partnerships, and collaborations.
- (B) Guidelines for exhibit selections:
 1. Suitability of subject, technique, and style for intended audience
 2. Appropriateness to special events, Library programs, anniversaries, holidays, etc.
 3. Historical or regional relevance
 4. Opportunity to promote the use of the Library and Library services
 5. Participation in previous exhibits
 6. Potential interest of viewers and the public
 7. Recency of previous Library exhibits by the same artist, lender, or organization
 8. Recency of previous Library exhibits of similar items or topics
 9. Encouragement of community dialogue
 10. Exhibit material that will not be selected nor displayed:
 - a. Commercial exhibits
 - b. Exhibits which feature material of an obscene nature or that violate laws.
 - c. Announcements of religious activities.
 - d. Those promoting political parties or candidates or those advocating the election of any candidate or a stand on any issues on the election ballot.

- e. Announcements or advertisements of fund-raising activities (individual or group) or of drives to stimulate membership or subscriptions. Exceptions may be made for one-time fund-raising events sponsored by community service organizations.
- f. Announcements of advertisements by profit-making organizations.
- g. Announcements which publicize ongoing programs or series of programs except those of tax-supported institutions.
- h. Legal notices.
- i. Notices of merchandise or services for sale.
- j. Rental announcements.
- k. Lost pets.

IV. Description of Spaces

- (A) Lobby display case: Dimensions are 11 feet, 2 inches wide, 5 feet high, 18 3/4 inches deep. The glass case is lighted, lockable, has a fabric backboard suitable for mounting items, and adjustable shelves.
- (B) Christensen Family Art Gallery: 120 linear feet of picture rails with hanging accessories, located on the library's main floor.
- (C) Free-standing exhibits: upon request, they may be displayed as long as they do not interfere with library services, traffic patterns, or safety.
- (D) Bulletin boards and pamphlet racks: permission may be requested of library staff to distribute materials in these spaces, located throughout the building.

V. Booking

- (A) Reservations for display space are made through the "Collaborate with the Library" form at midlibrary.org/collaborate. Space will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.
- (B) Reservations for the lobby display case may be made up to one year in advance.

- (C) The exhibit case is usually booked for one to two months at a time. The Christensen Family Art Gallery is usually booked for four months at a time, or at the discretion of the Library Director.
- (D) All requests to post materials to the bulletin board must be submitted to the Deputy Library Director.

VI. Publicity

- (A) The Library and Gallery Committee will promote the Christensen Family Art Gallery through community calendars, on the library's website, social media and print materials distributed in the gallery. Artists must provide photos of their work and grant the library written permission to display images of their work on the library website and social media.

VII. Liability

- (A) The library assumes no responsibility for the preservation, protection, or possible damage to or theft of any item displayed or exhibited. All items placed in the library for exhibit are so placed at the owner's risk.
- (B) All exhibitors must sign an Exhibitor Agreement Form.

VIII. Reconsideration

- (A) The library recognizes that some materials are controversial and that any given item may offend some patrons. Selection of materials will not be made on the basis of anticipated approval or disapproval but solely on the basis of the principles set forth in this policy.
- (B) Library materials will not be marked or identified to show approval or disapproval of their contents, and no library materials will be sequestered, except to protect them from injury or theft.
- (C) Responsibility for reading and the use of the library by children rests with their parents or legal guardians. At no time will library staff act *in loco parentis*. Selection of library materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that they may come into the possession of children.
- (D) South Central Library patrons or Middleton residents requesting that an item be withdrawn from the collection may complete a "Reconsideration of Library Resources" form.

- (E) The review of questioned materials will be treated objectively and as an important matter. General acceptance of the material will be checked by consulting authoritative lists and critical reviews in light of the library's selection policy. Passages will not be taken out of context, and the material will be evaluated in its entirety.
- (F) The Director will respond in writing to the complainant within 14 days with a decision regarding the resource in question. The Director will keep a log of forms filed and his/her response.
- (G) In the event of an appeal on the decision of the Library Director, the inquiry will be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Middleton Public Library Board of Trustees with the Library Board serving as the final arbiter. After a final decision, the resource in question shall not be reconsidered for three calendar years.
- (H) The "Reconsideration of Library Resources" form may also be used by the complainant who appeals a decision not to purchase a particular item. The basic procedure will be the same, resulting in a written decision to the complainant.

Adopted April 4, 2019
Amended July 13, 2021
Amended November 11, 2025

Reconsideration of Library Resources Form

Middleton Public Library

Your Name: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Library Card Number _____

Resource on which you are commenting:

- Book
- DVD
- Internet Resource
- Magazine/Newspaper
- Music CD
- Library Program
- Exhibit or Display
- Other

Author/Publisher or Producer/Date: _____

Title: _____

Item on display: _____

Please briefly answer the following questions about the resource that you would like to have reconsidered.

1. How did you learn of this resource?

2. To what do you object? Please be as specific as possible.

3. Have you read/watched/listened to the entire resource? If not, what parts did you read/watch/listen to?

4. What do you feel the effect of the resource might be?

5. What item with a similar purpose, or an opposing viewpoint, would you suggest in place of this resource?

6. Additional comments:

Thank you for taking the time to fill out this form. The Library Director will respond to your concerns within fourteen business days upon receipt of this form.

**Updated October 2022
Updated 12/9/2025**