



Plano
Public
Library

A Service of the City of Plano

I “Art” Libraries: Exhibiting 101

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Cross Timbers Library Collaborative Conference

- Hi, I’m Bethany.
- And I’m Sarah.
- We are librarians and exhibit coordinators for the Plano Public Library.





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The Art in the Library program began as part of Plano’s city-wide initiative to expand arts in in the city, specifically the downtown City Art District.

The 18st AIRSpace debuted in 2016 at Harrington Library, the closest location to downtown. The name refers to the street that Harrington Library is located on, and AIR is an acronym for Artist In Residence. The 18st AIRSpace program provides professional artists a place to work and exhibit to the community.

Also in 2016 an art instructor from the Parks and Rec department exhibited his work and that of his another library location. Public interest in this exhibit lead the library to expand its Art in the Library program to all five locations.

Why Show Art?

- Library has lots of great space
- Library has lots of people



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Space

- Plenty of natural light
- Professional grade exhibition systems, not hodge-podge or like a flea market– allow artists to showcase their art in a Museum or gallery-like space
- Free of cost to the artists

People

- Great exposure – our library has five locations that averages 4200 people a day and is open seven days a week

Our Exhibit Policy states that the purpose of art in the library is:

- To Promote public information and education
- To enhance the patron experience in the library through art
- To nourish intellectual, aesthetic and creative growth
- To encourage individuals who contribute to the increase of knowledge or extension of the arts
 - From our Exhibit Policy

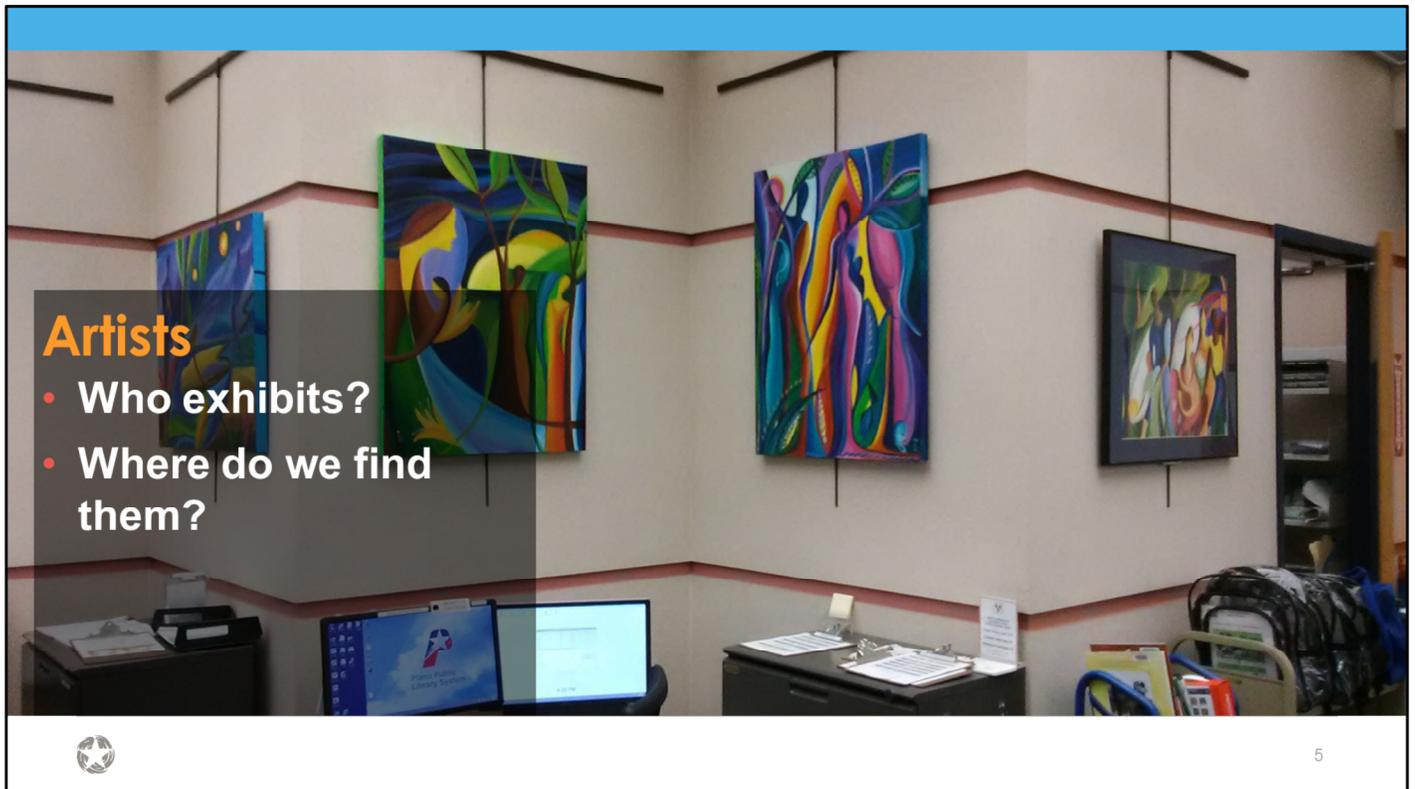
Connecting artists with community



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So how do we connect artists with the community?



SO *update with stats from 2016-2018 from all 5 locations

Exhibitors

- Professional artists
- Amateur artists (includes local art classes)
- Staff
- Travelling Exhibits
- All ages (6-96 YO)

Found by:

- Word of mouth
- Seeing the art in the library
- Staff/Patron recommendations
- Art shows/festivals & articles
- Library's website & brochure
- Travelling exhibits

First show → local art instructor who teaches Rec Center classes + his students → seen by local artist in the library who did own show → connected us to another local art studio who did show

FOR ACADEMICS: pull from talent available → connect with art instructors at your school/university → display students class projects, find new artists from student body

18th AIR SPACE
ARTIST IN RESIDENCE

Audience

- Establish the community's cultural identity
- Align exhibits with library based on city demographics
- Schedule exhibits to complement programming

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Since we have 5 libraries → each library serves a different segment of the population; each has their own identity
 Establish that location's community's cultural identity through art

Direct exhibits towards certain libraries based on demographic:

- 2016 American Community Survey
 - GH - large Hispanic population (15% Hispanic)
 - MMD/WOH - large Asian (Chinese and Indian) population (19% Asian)

Share artists between libraries if exhibit was popular in one location; know which libraries will have similar success

Complement programming:

Festivals- outreach events and library hosted (i.e. Holi)

Calendar events and anniversaries: Alzheimer's Awareness, World Peace Day ???, Black History Month (exhibits from Smithsonian and Humanities Texas), Hispanic Heritage Month, (Alzheimer's Association, Plano Lions Club)

Practical Concerns



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How do you start?

Policy & Expectations

- Pre-approval of artwork
- No sales in library
- Waiver

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Before you let any artwork up on the wall, you must have an exhibit policy in place.

We started with an existing policy which we refined over time based on experience with artists

- When we updated our policy, we started by conducting a survey of other libraries that exhibit art to see what they included in their policies
- We were surprised to find that many libraries did not have exhibit policies!
- Not having a policy can lead to confusion from exhibitors and even result in legal action

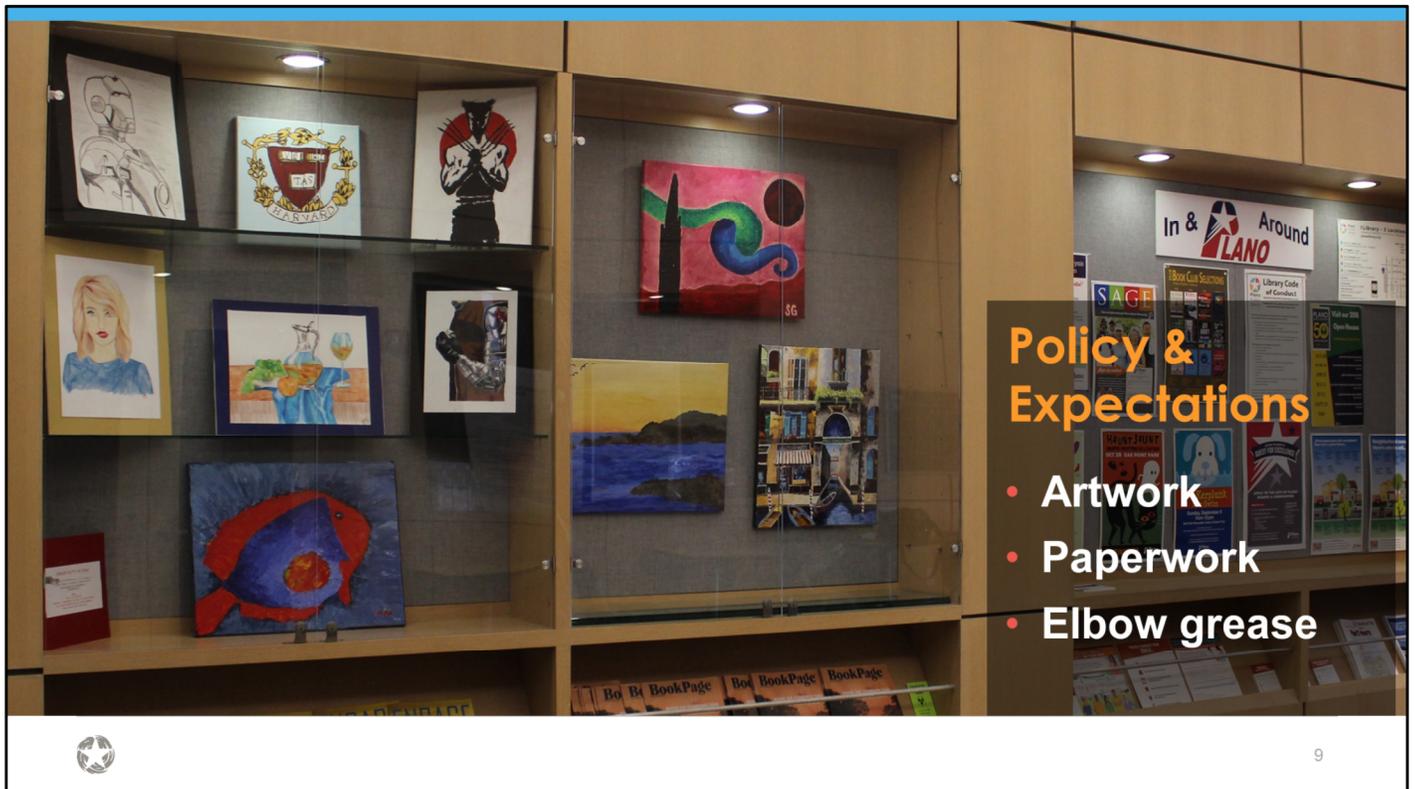
Exhibit Policy (309) → Lays out guidelines for exhibiting

Key points:

- Artwork must be approved before exhibited
- No sales information can be posted - only contact information

Waiver

- Grants library immunity in the event that any damage occurs to the art while it is on display

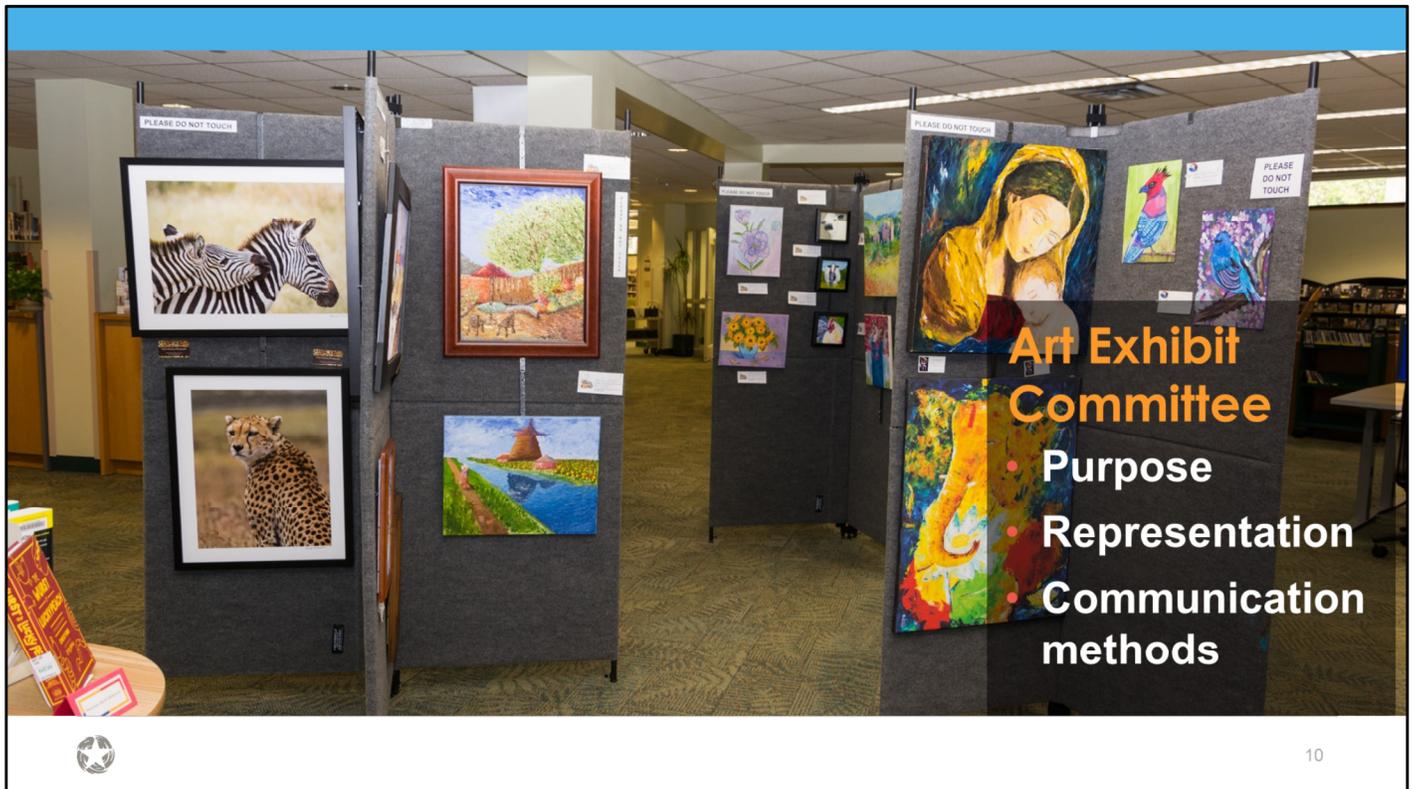


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Artists get free, museum-like exhibit space with lots of light and people

What do we expect from them in return?

- “installation ready” art based on our display systems (Walker System, panel hangers)
- Provide inventory list of artwork prior to exhibiting
- Digital images of art for pre-approval & publicity
- Hang art and take down art – no staff involvement. We assist as needed in special cases.



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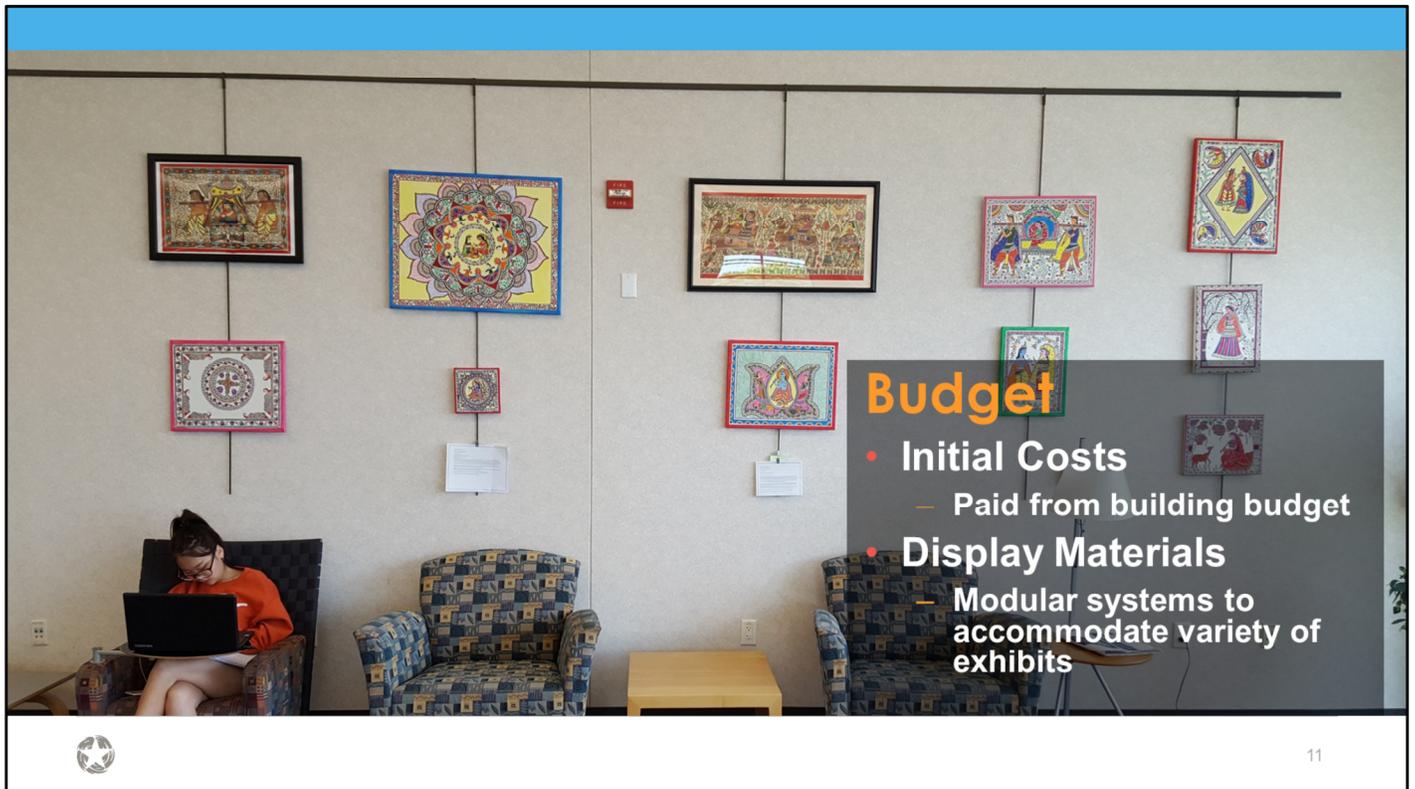
Once each location had started exhibiting artist, we realized we needed a way to communicate how we were doing. The library created an Art Exhibit Committee to coordinate art at each of the five library locations

The committee includes one staff member from each location

The exhibit coordinators:

- Share information about display materials
- Coordinate grant-money purchases for use in each location
- Share information about artists
- Maintain a library-wide schedule of exhibits
- Research and recommend traveling exhibits for each location
- Share experiences and expertise

We communicate mostly by email, but try to meet in person at least once a year.



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Started on a minimal budget → since artists show free of cost, only initial costs are display materials and staff time

Initial costs were paid from annual building budget

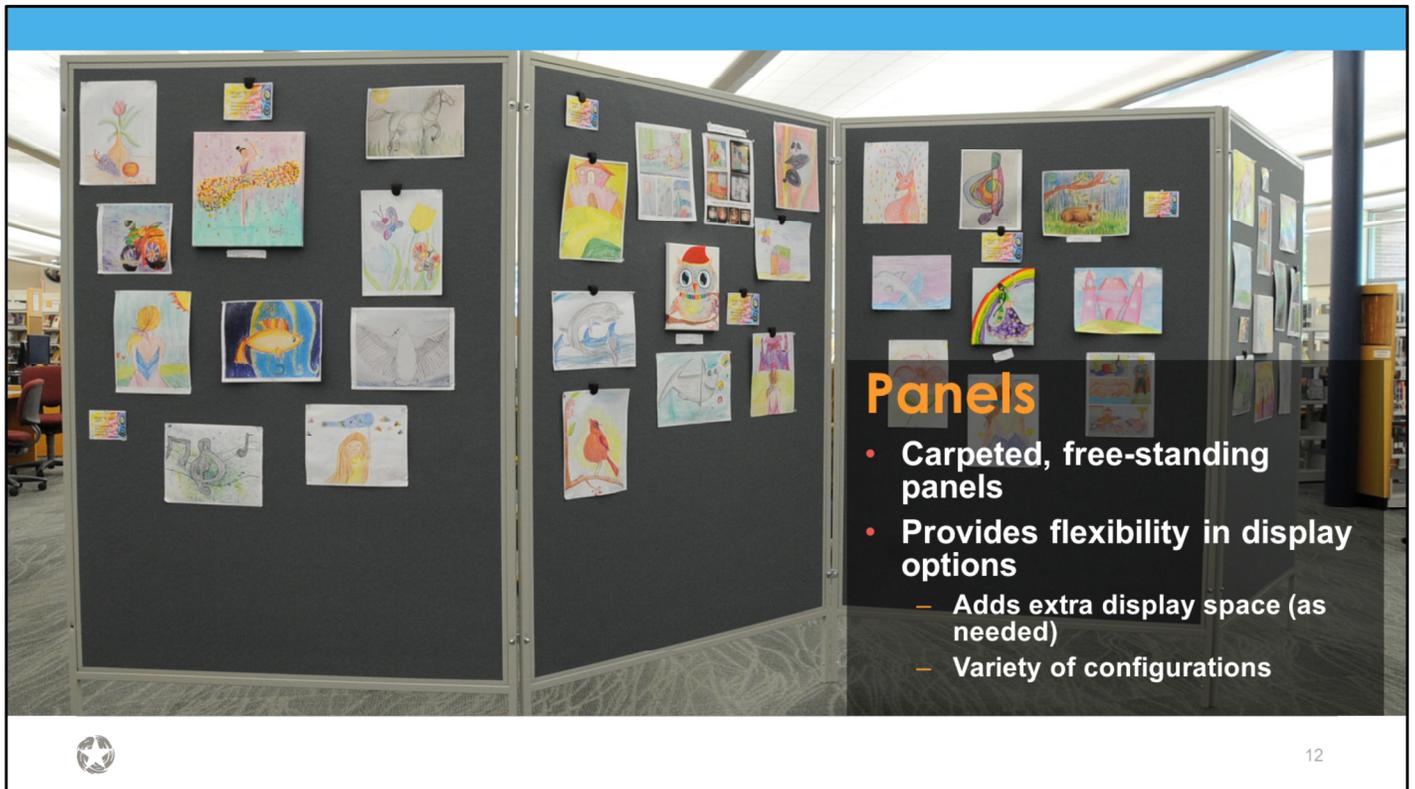
- Walker System + Panels → FIRST purchase
- have expanded on when budget/grant funds allow

Exhibit needs for 2D and 3D art

Some are location specific, others can travel between locations

Modular display systems (to accommodate a multitude of exhibits)

- Wall
 - Walker System
 - › Rail affixed to wall
 - › Rods & hangers configured to fit art being displayed
 - Initial purchase under \$600, installation under \$1000



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Panels

- Carpeted, free-standing panels
- Gives flexibility
 - Adds extra display space when needed
 - Can be arranged in several configurations depending on how many panels/how much space required for exhibit
- Includes system to hang framed artwork
 - Can also use thumbtacks/t-pins to hang directed on panels



BRACEROS

Photographed by the Hermandos Mayo
Curator: John Mraz

A specter is haunting the world – the specter of immigration. In this exhibit we explore the experience of emigrating, as it was rendered by photographers who had also been uprooted. Today, as waves of migrations hurl themselves on the coasts and borders of the world, it seems appropriate to reflect on the Mexican braceros who were recruited to fill the ranks of US soldiers who had gone to fight fascism in the Second World War. Under the "Bracero Program, 1942-1964," Mexicans were legally contracted to work in the USA as temporary unskilled laborers. We tell this story through photographs made by other emigrants and immigrants, including those who came to the USA for different reasons (1939), who – though they left their country for different reasons – share the particular gaze of emigrants to this task.

Easels

- 20 aluminum easels
- Shared across locations
- Adds space for poster exhibits

LOS BRACEROS



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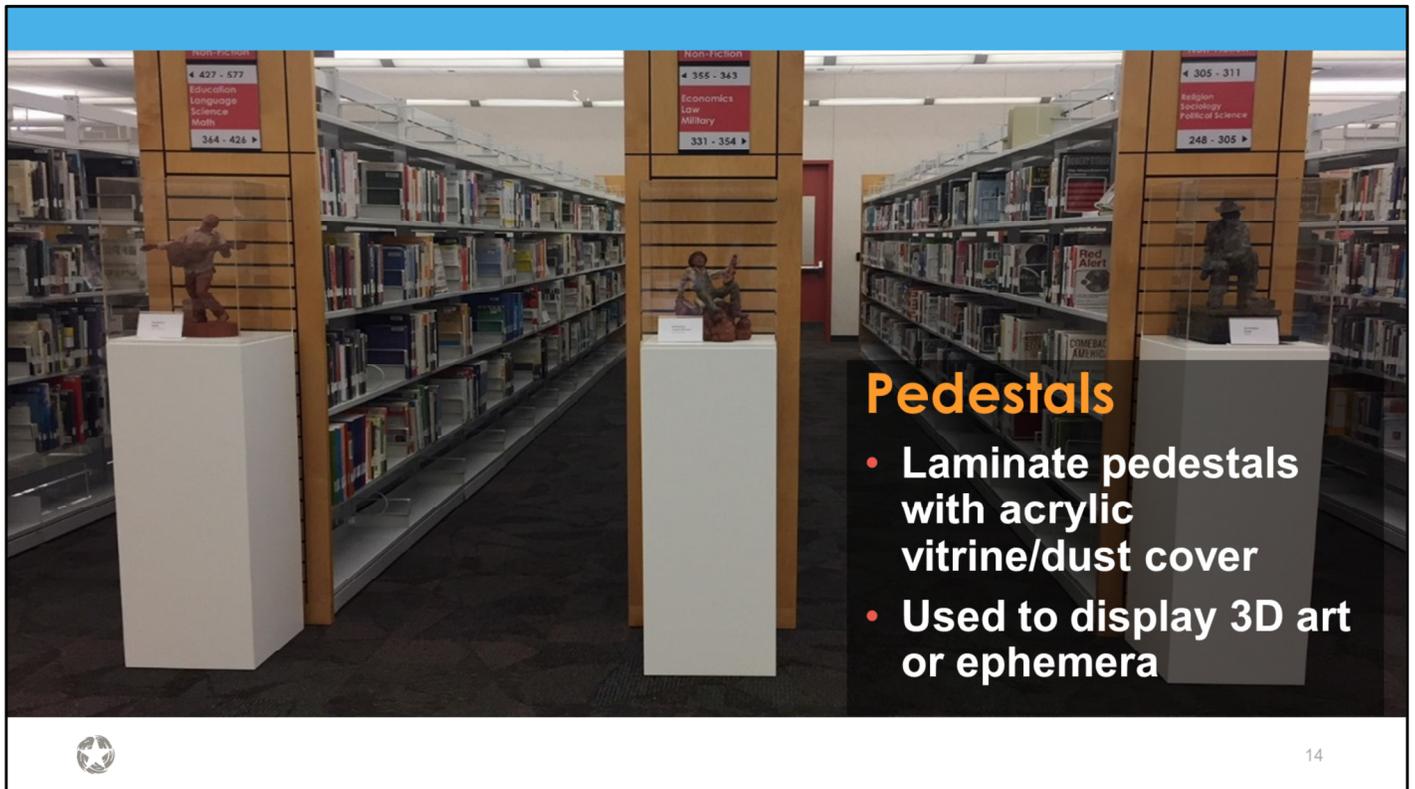
Easels

Aluminum → Light weight
Adjustable heights

Can be shared between locations

Poster exhibits → partnerships with local schools to show science projects; exhibits like Braceros from UTD





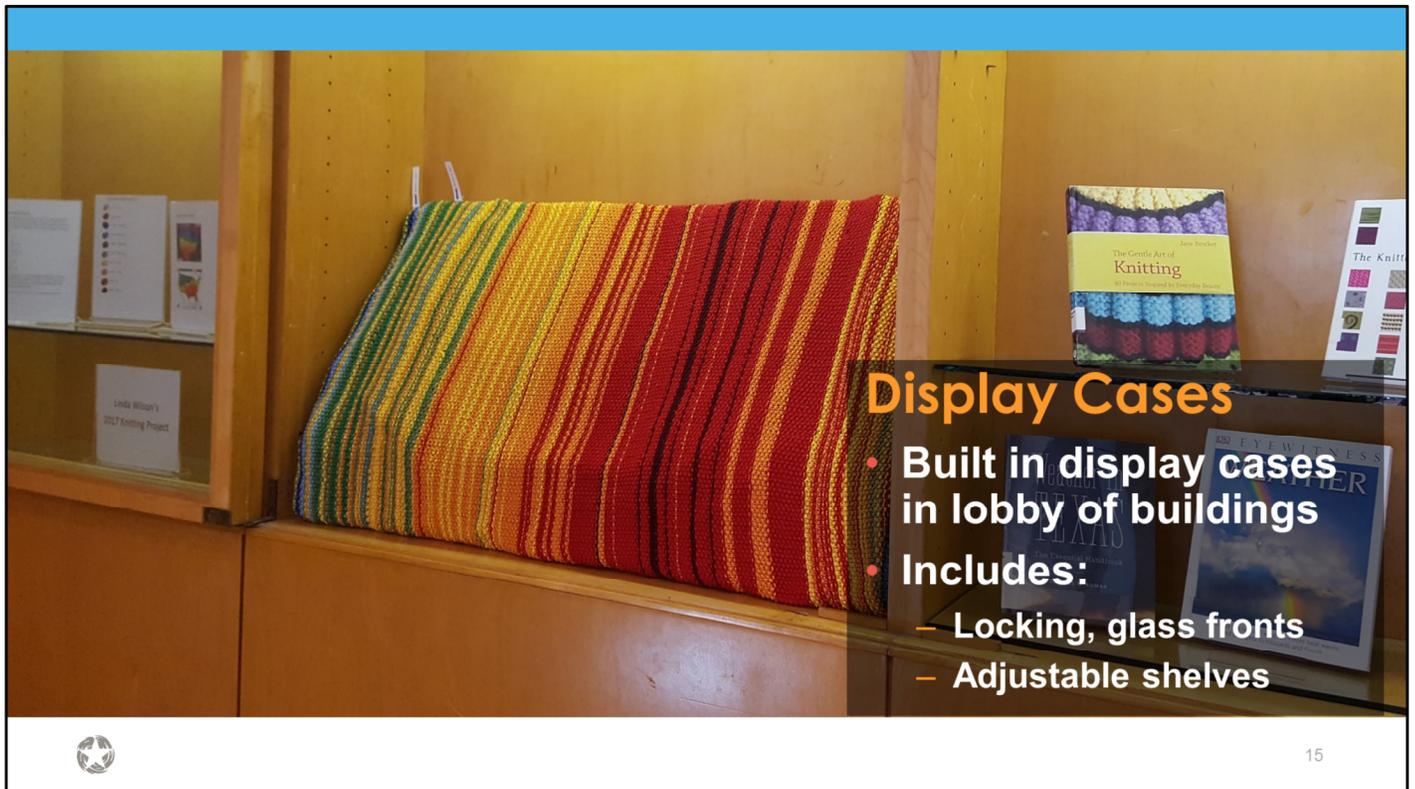
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Pedestals

Laminate pedestals with acrylic vitrine/dust cover

Used to display 3D art (such as sculptures), or ephemeral objects (books, documents, other objects)

Purchased through Pedestal Source, Gaylord Archival, other museum supply stores



Display Cases

- Built in display cases in lobby of buildings
- Includes:
 - Locking, glass fronts
 - Adjustable shelves

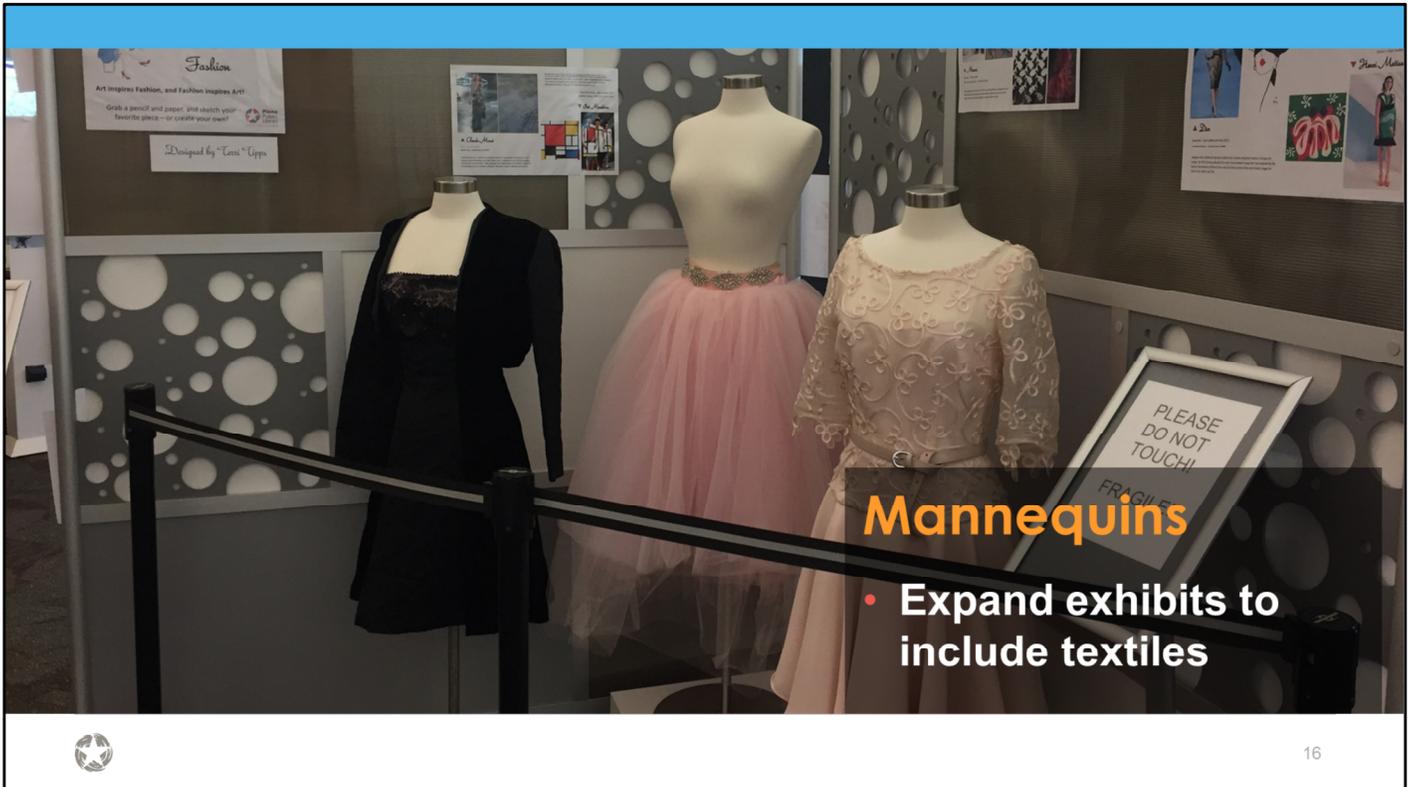
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Display Cases

Locking, glass front cases with adjustable/removable shelves
(each location has similar cases)

Can use to promote library programs/events OR display
art/crafts/collections

Revamping to give a more professional look AND
create unity between locations



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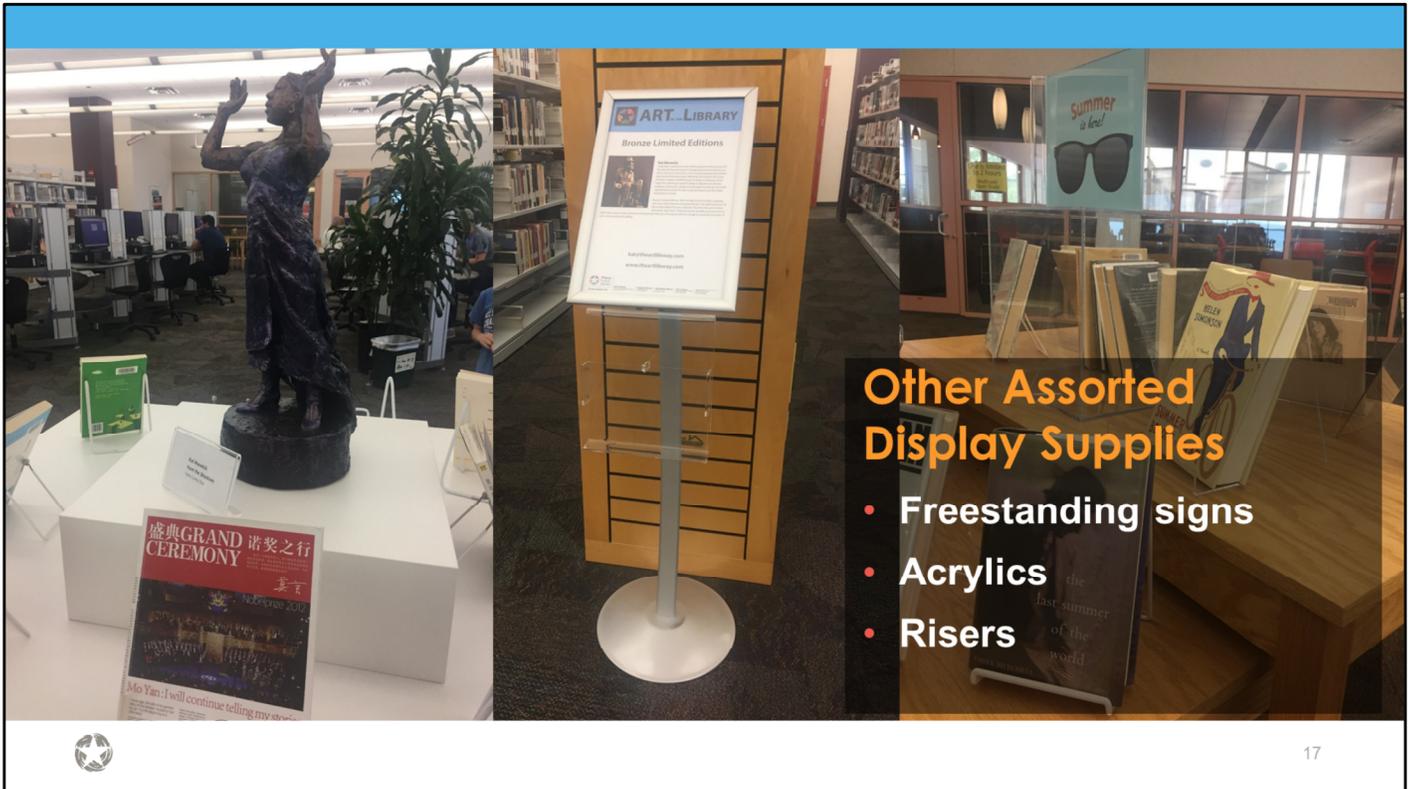
Mannequins

4 female, 2 male

Purchased from: Amazon

Expand exhibit options to include more textiles

Potential uses: cosplay, local tailors/seamstresses,
(our first exhibit) exploring the relationship
between fashion and art



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Other Assorted Display Supplies

Freestanding signs

- Used to provide artist info, hold handouts, etc.
- Artist Info template used at all 5 locations to provide sense of unity

Acrylics

- Signage (tabletop)
- Book cradles
- Book stands

Risers (for floor and book cases) (acrylic and laminate)



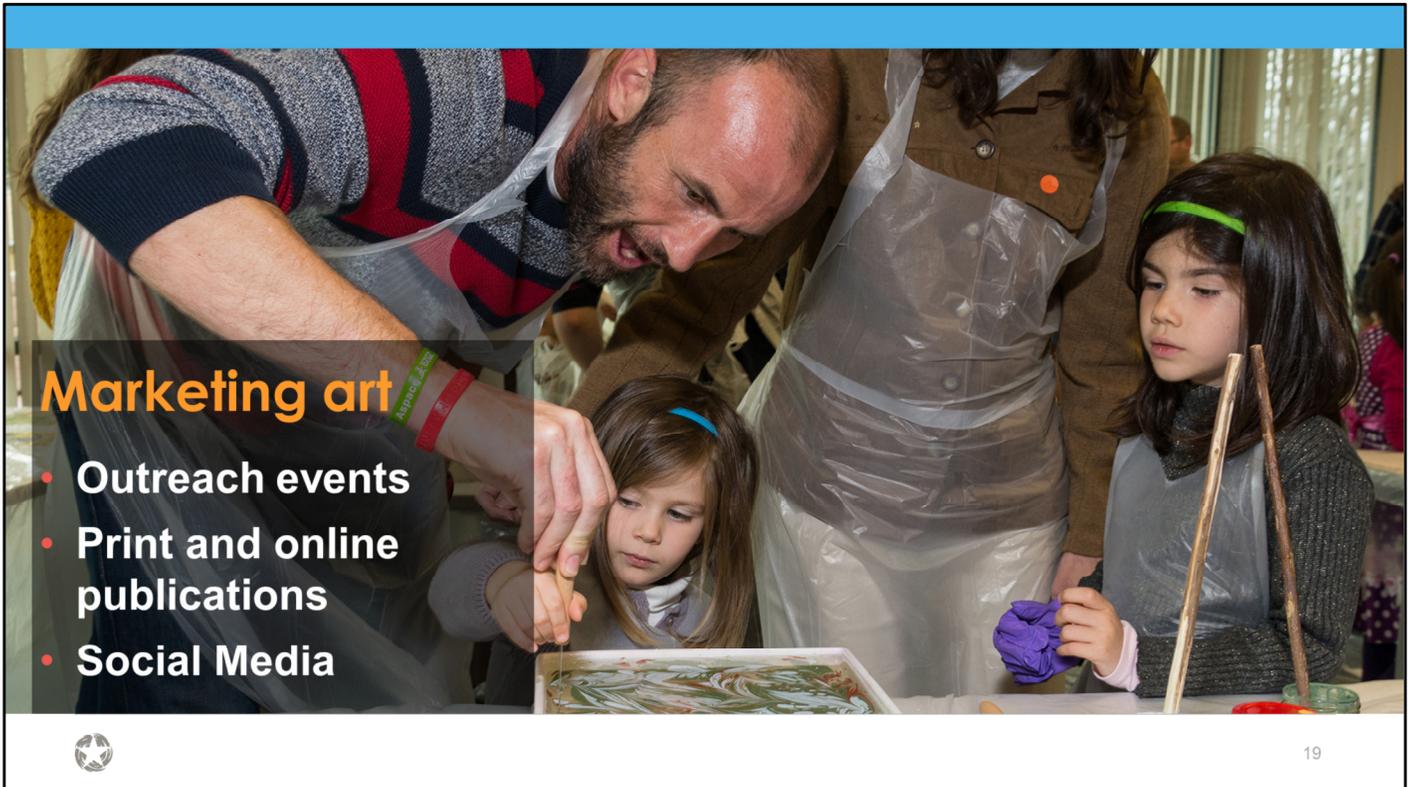
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Grants can pay for the display materials or travelling exhibits

Texas State Library and Archives Commission Special Grants

- Funded by IMLS
- Art Spark + Art Spark 2
 - Expanding display options
 - Helped pay for travelling exhibits

Humanities Texas (also does grants)



Marketing art

- Outreach events
- Print and online publications
- Social Media



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Outreach:

- Staff attend art exhibits and other local festivals to talk to people about the exhibit space
 - (ArtFest, Downtown Plano Art & Wine walk)
- Staff share information about the program at presentations to the community as well as at conferences
- Library art programs
 - Annual bookmark contest

Library publications: art exhibit information is included in:

- Plano Library eNews
- Plano Library Engage Brochure

Local publications: staff members write columns about the library, including what's on exhibit, for local publications:

- Plano Profile ((Samuel Molina, March 2018 AIR)
- Plano Magazine (Top 5 Things To Do at PPLS)

Get the word out via

- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, FLICKR

Looking Ahead

- Catalog of exhibits
- Development of art spaces
- City and community partnerships

State of the Art
HAGGARD LIBRARY
2016-2017

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Catalog/report

- Annual publication
- Catalog of artists/exhibits
- Stats and future thinking
- Can be used as marketing to potential artists or for City Council

Expand art spaces

- 3D (mannequins for textiles, pedestal cases, risers)
- Improvement and expansion of wall, floor and display cases
 - To provide more opportunities for exhibits

Establishment of partnerships

- Annual exhibits featuring the work of Plano ISD students
- Local organizations (Alzheimer's Alliance of Dallas???, Plano Lions Club)
- Genealogy department
- Other City of Plano departments like Parks and Recreation (local amateur art classes)

Work on a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for prospective exhibitors has begun in order to facilitate clear communication of expectations and responsibilities between exhibitors and the Plano Public Libraries.



Questions?

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#morethanbooks



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