



Rendering of the art site, view looking towards the northeast corner

Midland Library Gathering Circle Artwork Request for Qualifications

If you would prefer these materials in another language please contact the RACC project team for translation services.

Interpretation services are available, please email info@racc.org.

Servicio de interpretación disponible

Предоставляются услуги переводчика

Có dịch vụ thông

提供口译服务

In partnership with [Multnomah County Library](#) (MCL), the [Regional Arts & Culture Council](#) (RACC) invites artists/artist teams living in Oregon and Washington to submit qualifications for a site-specific interior artwork at the soon-to-be renovated [Midland Library](#) as part of the [Library Capital Bond Projects](#). One artist/artist team will be selected to create a 2-dimensional wall-mounted artwork which will frame the library's interior Gathering Circle, a communal seating area directly opposite the new entryway. The artwork may encompass texture and 3D elements if appropriate for the site and within budget. Located on the north wall of the Gathering Circle, the artwork will be highly visible as people arrive at the library. The artist(s) may also choose to include the neighboring east facing wall, shown to the right side of the image above. The budget available for the commission comes from Multnomah County's Percent for Art Program and is \$60,000. Submissions are due by **Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 5:00pm PDT**.

Art Opportunity

We are seeking an artist or artist team to create a site-specific interior wall-mounted artwork for Midland Library's Gathering Circle, a new communal seating area that encourages and fosters connection. The far north wall of the art site frames the backdrop of the Gathering Circle and is directly across from the new main entry doors, therefore this artwork will be one of the first things visible as people enter the library. It is possible for the artwork to extend to the east wall of the Gathering Circle, depending on the artist's vision and budget allocations. There will be a featured book collection on the west wall of the space, the current intention is for this selection to celebrate Midland Library's various cultural communities. However, the final determination for this compilation will be made by library staff.

While the site primarily suits a 2-dimensional wall-mounted artwork, there is a desire to incorporate texture and/or 3-dimensional elements, created through either illusion or physical components. Use of mediums such as textiles/fabric arts, ceramics, mosaics, paint, light, color, wood, metal and more could be considered. We expect the artist(s) to determine the medium for their work through conversations with the project team, taking other design considerations for the space into account.

For example, the Gathering Circle is bookended by the Teen Space, on the other side of the east wall, and the Children's Space, to the west. In addition, a Sensory Room will be accessible from the Gathering Circle space. These groups as well as the diverse range of populations whom the library serves should be considered within the design. As this area is intended to be a place where all library guests feel comfortable, the artwork should not be overly stimulating, reflecting on and incorporating aspects of [trauma-informed design](#) will be beneficial.

The north wall of the Gathering Circle is about 16ft in height and 36ft in length with an approximately 9ft bay of full height windows that interrupts it. The east wall of the Gathering Circle is 16ft in height and 26ft in width. Both walls have tiered seating up to 4ft-6inch in height that is permanently installed in front of the walls. The artwork should take the spatial adjustments related to the windows and seating into consideration, especially as it is desired for this artwork to extend down to heights where many people will be able to reach and touch it, including children. The total area for art is approximately 340sq.ft. on both the north and east walls, with a combined total of 680sq.sf. At heights that are accessible to general patrons, the finished artwork must be durable, easy to maintain, and tamper resistant. It should be assumed that people will touch the artwork over time.

Artwork on the north wall will not be in the path of any direct sunlight, however artwork on the east wall will be. The wall behind the artwork will be a drywall surface with a plywood backing provided for the full extent of the wall(s). The door for entering the Sensory Room will be to the west of the north wall, so the artwork will need to retain ADA clearances in order to allow for access. Therefore, the overall depth of the artwork can extend up to 4in maximum from the face of the drywall wall under 7ft in height and up to 6in maximum above 7ft in height.

The artist(s) will be responsible for delivering a completed piece of artwork to be installed on site as a final deliverable and will also work with the design team to select complementary fabrics for the furniture in this area. The project team will coordinate installation with the artist(s), RACC, the construction contractor and any third party vendors, if necessary. Artist(s) are invited to either conduct the final installation personally or be part of reviewing the final install, depending on the medium and vision for the artwork.

Artwork Goals and Qualities

The goal is for the many works of art in the library to represent the myriad of communities that live, work and play in Mill Park, and other surrounding neighborhoods, especially under-represented communities. Communities served by Midland Library should be reflected in the new works of art through artistic expression and creative storytelling. There is a deep desire for the Gathering Circle artwork to instill a sense of place and belonging, creating a warm, inviting and welcoming environment where imagination, interests and engagement can be inspired.

The overall concept for the design of Midland Library is based on the idea of weaving. The project aims to weave together a diverse range of stories and lived experiences in a shared communal space. Humans' relationship to nature, especially in the Pacific Northwest, is also central to this concept. On the interior of the building, this manifests as a focus on water as a connector to all life and environments. As part of the community engagement process so far, library patrons were asked to participate in the selection of the color palette for the interior design. [Option B](#), the concept inspired by the movement of water, creating a calm space with gentle colors and soft, natural patterns, won the public vote. In addition, through ongoing community engagement efforts with library users and the MCL team, members of various communities have expressed that circles are a significant spatial form for gathering in many cultures and traditions. Community feedback has noted that circles represent equality and life cycles. We are seeking artwork that considers culturally specific colors, shapes and patterns, perhaps reflecting textiles, symbols and color palettes, from the various communities served by Midland Library. Innovatively weaving the vast array of community stories and experiences together is essential. Further collective visioning, through engagement with the community, will likely inspire even more creative suggestions.

The Gathering Circle artwork should take these design directives into consideration, complementing the interior design palette and aligning with the overall goals to center trauma-informed design in this space. Themes of weaving, water and circles can be drawn upon to inspire the final artwork design, however we are not necessarily expecting literal interpretations or representations of these concepts in the artwork.

Examples of communities that frequent Midland Library include Black/African American, Indigenous Peoples, Somali and other East African immigrants, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin speakers), Vietnamese, Slavic and Eastern European, Malay, Bhutanese, Iraqi, Tongan, Latinx (not just Spanish language speakers), youth and elders, LGBTQIA2S+, people living with disabilities and neurodivergence, people experiencing housing insecurity. More information from the community engagement process so far, including demographics, will be shared with the artist/artist team to ensure authentic understanding and representation.

Budget

The selected artist/artist team will receive \$60,000 for this opportunity to create a site-specific interior 2-dimensional wall-mounted artwork. This fee is inclusive of all project expenses including artist fees, design development, materials, fabrication, installation, community engagement scope of work and communication/coordination with the design team, construction team and third-party contractors who may help to fabricate and install the artwork.

Community Engagement and Participatory Design

Community engagement is a central component to this project. We are seeking an artist/artist team who welcomes and reflects the diverse communities that are served by Midland Library within their process and work. Genuine understanding and demonstration of community engagement practices in existing artistic practice, past work and/or other key areas of experience where skillsets may be transferable, such as teaching, mentorship, community organizing, care work and other non-typical/non-traditional examples of embedding community into process and practice, are highly desirable.

Prior to finalizing a design, the selected artist/artist team will plan and facilitate at least two engagement sessions to meet with community stakeholders to gather information and insight into the library, community and area. The artist(s) is expected to welcome and encourage community participation within the design phase, seeking feedback, input and inspiration from key stakeholders to ensure the final artwork meets the intended goals as outlined above, specifically community representation.

Midland Library will be available as a venue to host community engagement events. Interpretation, translation and other access services can be made available, if needed, and coordinated through MCL and/or RACC, if enough time is given in advance. Working or in-progress design materials and narratives may be requested for wider community communication updates and will be coordinated in conjunction with the project team.

About the Library Capital Bond Project

As part of the [Library Capital Bond Projects](#), MCL is expanding the Midland Library to provide additional space and an enjoyable experience for all through renovations to the existing building as well as more robust services. Located on the southwest corner of SE 122nd Ave and SE Morrison St in the Mill Park neighborhood of east Portland, Oregon, the existing 24,000 square foot library will be updated and expanded by 6,000 square feet. The revised site will include a new entryway which creates the opportunity for an interior Gathering Circle, a communal space to foster and encourage connection amongst patrons, staff and community members alike.

The renovation and expansion of Midland Library is part of the [first phase](#) of the [Library Capital Bond Projects](#) and will be one of the first to reopen, currently scheduled for late spring/early summer 2024.

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to artists/artist teams based in Oregon and Washington. If applying as a team, at least one member must meet the residence eligibility requirement. Those with significant current or past connections, or those with interest and ability to create meaningful connections, to Midland Library, the Mill Park neighborhood and other surrounding neighborhoods and communities served by the library are preferred. Applicants who have an interest in and/or experience with community engagement processes, including social practice, which inform their approach and art practice are strongly encouraged to apply. Strong consideration will be given to artists who have experience working with youth and residents from historically underrepresented communities to develop their artwork including communities of color as well as immigrant and refugee communities.

MCL and RACC are committed to reflecting the cultural richness of our city by promoting opportunities for emerging and historically underrepresented artists. Artists/artist teams representing communities of color are strongly encouraged to apply. RACC is committed to engaging new communities of artists and expanding the range of artistic and cultural expression represented in the City's public art collection.

The selected artist/artist team must be able to create, complete and deliver their artwork by February/March 2024.

Selection Process

At this time, the selection process will be entirely virtual. A selection panel composed of Multnomah County Library representatives, local artists, community members and East County residents, Library Bond Project team members and Midland Library design team members will review artists' submissions and choose more than one finalist to invite to interview for the commission.

Overall, the purpose of the interview is to allow the artist(s) and panel to meet each other and engage in a mutually beneficial and informative conversation. It's an opportunity for the artist(s) to better understand the context of the project and the intentions the selection panel has for the final art piece. Both parties are given the chance to ask questions and determine best alignment and artist selection for the project. After the interviews are completed, the selection panel will choose a final artist/artist team to award the public art opportunity to. The selected artist(s) will then be issued a Design Phase contract during which they will create a community engagement plan, meet with the community and create a proposal that includes a design for the Gathering Circle, a budget and a timeline.

Criteria for selecting semifinalists for interviews are (1) quality of past work as demonstrated in submitted images; (2) ability and interest in creating site-specific artwork; (3) how past artwork has fit one or more of the general goals described above, specifically community engagement and designing with stakeholder communities, through demonstrated processes and/or final design; (4) existing, interest in and/or ability to create connections to Midland Library, Mill Park, other surrounding neighborhoods and communities served by the library.

Please note the selection panel reserves the right to select an artist who does not directly apply to this call, if appropriate. Likewise, the panel maintains the option to make no selection from submitted applications and to reopen the selection process or propose other methods of selection if no applicant is accepted.

How to Apply

All application materials must be submitted through the [RACC Opportunity Portal](https://racc.org/apply), an online application system. Applicants will need to create an account, or log into their existing account at <https://racc.org/apply>. If you are applying as a team, please assign one person to apply and be the point of contact on behalf of the team. Submissions due **Thursday, November 3, 2022 at 5:00pm PDT**

Application Materials

- **Artist bio/resume.** Upload a PDF, no more than two pages, that outlines your creative activities, artistic accomplishments and experience with community engagement. If applying as a team, submit one PDF that includes a bio/resume for all team members.
- **Statement of interest.** In 3000 characters or less, provide a statement that outlines the following:
 - Your interest in this project
 - Why this project, its focus and themes are of interest to you
 - Why you'd be a good match for the project
 - How do you foresee your work connecting to the mission and values of the project
 - Describe your capacity and/or experience to complete the scope of work
 - Explain why you value community engagement in your artistic process and share past examples of successfully incorporating community visions, values and voices into a project
 - What is your approach to community engagement
 - How has community engagement impacted your process
 - How has community engagement informed your art-making practice and the end results of your work
 - If you are applying as a team, describe your individual roles on the team and how you anticipate working together
- **Up to 8 past work samples.** These work samples are the primary way the quality of your work will be judged. Provide up to two images, no larger than 5MB each, for each work sample. For each image, please provide title, artist name, media, dimensions, year completed, budget and location. Conceptual information is desirable but not required.

Once you have started your application, you can save after each step and sign out. Your application will be saved as a draft that you can continue to work on, as needed. Please note that after you click "Submit," your application is final and no further edits can be made.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact us throughout the process.

Questions

We are here to support and assist you! If you have questions about the overall opportunity or the RACC application portal, would like to set up a time for a phone/video call or have any other needs for assistance please email project manager, Sophie, at shook@racc.org.

If you would like to be considered for this opportunity and don't have a computer or online access, please feel free to contact RACC for support. Also, if you prefer these materials in another language you can contact the RACC project team for translation services.

We strongly encourage you to submit your application with enough time for any questions to be answered prior to when submissions are due as enquiries received towards the end of that period may not be responded to. We appreciate your understanding and consideration of our capacity.

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Important Dates

October 6, 2022 – RFQ launch

October 19, 2022 at 12:30pm – Instagram Live Info Session. [Follow @regionalarts](#) on Instagram to stay informed.

October 26, 2022 at 5:00pm – Zoom Info Session. RSVP here.

November 3, 2022 – Applications due

November-December 2022 – Panel review and artist selection including interviews

January-May/June 2023 – Community Engagement and Participatory Design

June 2023-February 2024 – Fabrication and installation

March 2024 – Artwork complete and installed