

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS WASHINGTON STATE ARTS COMMISSION (WSAC)

Project: Assessment of Washington’s State Art Collection, Part II

ABOUT THE STATE ART COLLECTION

What is the age of the collection?

The first artworks were acquired in 1975. Currently, 30 to 35 artworks are added to the collection annually.

Where is artwork in the collection located?

The 4,500+ artworks in the State Art Collection are spread throughout 36 of Washington’s 39 counties. Roughly one-third of the collection can be found in King and Pierce counties (most populous metropolitan and suburban areas of the state). The works are located on college and university campuses (19%), at state agencies (12%), and in public schools (69%).

What types of media constitute the collection?

The types of media, in broad categories, are listed below. Database records also show a more specific “materials” field. Please note that 2-D glass has historically been categorized within the category “Paintings.”

Drawings	251
Paintings	1,440
Photographs	696
Prints	635
Sculpture	1,349
Textile	233
Video	34
Other	49

How many of the 4,500+ artworks are permanently sited, architecturally integrated, or outdoor works, and how many are small-scale portable works (e.g. works on paper, paintings, or photographs)?

Unlike many public art collections, all artwork in the State Art Collection is considered “permanently sited” even when it is physically portable. We do not have a prescribed rotation schedule for artwork; it is only re-sited when, for example, construction or conservation initiates a move. (The numbers of each type, below, are approximate.)

Physically portable artwork (generally smaller scale)	3,800
Permanently installed artwork (architecturally integrated)	750
Artwork located inside a building	4,200
Artwork sited outside	350

Are there any buildings where a large number of State Art Collection works are on display?

College and university campuses generally have the densest groupings of State Art Collection works, including both smaller “portable” works and larger scale, permanently installed works.

Has an assessment of the Collection ever been performed? If so, when was the collection last surveyed?

Contracted conservators Peter Malarkey and Jessica Kottke just completed an assessment utilizing a representative sample of the collection to project the needs of the entire collection. That assessment (*Assessment of Washington’s State Art Collection, Part I*) is intended as a precursor to the assessment advertised in this RFP. A comprehensive physical assessment of the collection has never been conducted.

ABOUT WSAC AND THE MANAGEMENT OF THE COLLECTION

What are the current staffing levels for the management of the collection?

We currently employ a collections manager at 0.8 full-time equivalent (FTE) and a conservation technician at 0.7 FTE.

Do you have policies in place for the management of the collection?

Yes. Our collections management policies are available on our website at: www.arts.wa.gov/public-art/documents/ArtCare.pdf. The document includes a history of the management of the collection, along with staffing and conservation funding levels.

How is the State Art Collection currently maintained? How is it conserved?

Per the terms of Interagency Agreements, the State Art Collection is maintained in partnership with the agencies whose sites are homes to individual artworks. Partner agencies are obligated to provide routine and special maintenance for state-owned artwork in their facilities, and WSAC is responsible for conservation as funded.

What is your current conservation budget? How is funding generated?

Funding to contract for conservation services (not including WSAC staffing costs) is currently capped by legislated budget proviso at \$100,000 per biennium. The funding is generated by the State Capital Budget ½ of 1% for artwork funding.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Is there any flexibility in the assessment dates as listed on the RFP?

There is little flexibility in the dates. The contract dates were designed to ensure that findings are available for WSAC's current strategic planning cycle.

Is submitting the report in electronic format acceptable, or do you want printed copies in addition to a digital version?

An electronic version only is just fine.

ABOUT AVAILABLE COLLECTION INFORMATION

Is there a current digital file for each collection asset?

The entire collection is tracked in a collections management database. There are digital images in the database for at least 1,255 objects. There are condition evaluations that include photography for 154 objects. The rest of the artwork image documentation is in 35 mm slide or black-and-white print format. Individual slides can be scanned by WSAC staff on an as-needed basis. In addition to basic condition information provided by WSAC inventory contacts (see inventory cycle question below), object condition reports by contracted conservators or conservation technicians can be provided on an as-needed basis.

What collections management software do you use and how will the contractor access that information?

We use MIMSY XG collections management software. MIMSY is an off-the-shelf museum collections management system that has been customized to meet the needs of our public art collection.

We expect to write reports that extract the needed data in order for the contractor to access that data. Reports can then be exported into a format usable by the contractor, most likely into an Excel spreadsheet. Images can be available in a report format, though not through Excel.

How is the database currently organized, and what types of computerized searches through the database are possible?

Every artwork in the collection has an object record, which is linked to several "people" records. The linked people records include an artist record and a site record with contact information for the site where the artwork is located. All fields on the object record can be searched. Attached to this document are sample object and people records.

Please note that there is both a broad artwork category field (i.e., painting, sculpture, photography) and the more specific “materials” field. Each record also notes whether the artwork is in an interior or exterior site and whether the artwork is physically portable.

What is your inventory cycle? How often do you connect with sites where the artwork is located?

We inventory each artwork in the collection every three years. The inventory is conducted electronically and with the help of contacts at the sites (i.e., facilities managers, school principals, art teachers) where the artworks are located. During the inventory, we ask basic questions about the artwork location, condition, identification plaque, and “use” at the site. This information will be accessible to the selected contractor.