Exhibition Committee
White Paper
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Mission statement:
The job of exhibitions at ArtCenter is to educate, engage, inspire and provoke, addressing both the internal audience of the college and the external audience of the local, regional, National and international communities we live in, through professionally curated public exhibitions and the skillful use of pedagogical spaces.

I. A listing of the spaces at ArtCenter that fall within this report

PUBLIC EXHIBITION SPACES
These are spaces whose primary purpose is external, presenting to outside visitors. In some cases, their purposes is often as much pedagogical as public, but they are run as spaces which are assumed to be open to the public. The high attention to quality of expression and process that ArtCenter instills in its students is the core value that unites these spaces.
   1. The Williamson Gallery
   2. The student gallery at Hillside
   3. The Hutto-Patterson Gallery at 870
   4. The Senior Projects gallery at 870
   5. The small student-curated gallery upstairs at 870
6. The Mullin Gallery at 1111
7. The HMTC gallery
8. The Grad Media Design gallery

PEDAGOGICAL SPACES
These are spaces that are used for classes, project presentations, graduation shows. While their primary purpose is internal, directed towards the classroom, they secondarily function as public spaces in that visitors can see work in progress or completed work. Examples would be:
1. The corridors outside the DCO at Hillside where Illustration mounts work for scholarship or graduation.
2. The corridors at Hillside that are used by Transportation students to show their drawings.
3. The bridge when used for presentation of projects by departments such as Product Design and Environmental Design.
4. The large gallery at 870, used by Fine Art and Illustration for projects and classes

DIGITAL SPACES
1. The new college website and digital galleries, along with departmental websites
2. The campus monitors
3. Possible exterior display screens on buildings.
4. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Behance, etc.

MORE FLUID SPACES
This would include circumstances such as:
1. Opportunistic exhibitions of a few weeks, organized in response to events
2. Display cases
3. Open studio days

II. Public exhibition spaces

1. Who is our audience for these public spaces?
   A. ArtCenter community
   B. Potential students and their families
   C. Surrounding community – Pasadena, LA, national, and international.
   D. Larger ripple effects, via articles, web presence, etc.

2. A crucial need for a plan to coordinate these spaces
   A. These proliferating galleries indicate a sea change in how we need to view and coordinate exhibitions at the college. Currently, spaces are being added without necessary accompanying budgets and staff. Exhibition spaces need a conceptual reason to exist and should be sustainable to ArtCenter resources.
   B. Each space requires: programming; purpose; budgets, including adequate marketing resources and costs of installation and receptions; staff. Parking has also
become an issue: as we encourage people to come in from outside, parking should not be prohibitive.

C. It is important that the complete story as well as all the majors of the school are represented on both campuses. Potential students visit both campuses, and existing students can be inspired by work outside of their own major.

D. It is essential that all these exhibition spaces not be put in competition with one another and made adversarial over utilizing college resources. To do that is to follow an old model at ArtCenter which has proven inefficient and disruptive. When there is cooperation, more opportunities become available.

3. Student galleries

A. History:

1. The student gallery in its current configuration was designed in 1992 by the architect Fred Fisher, the same architect who designed the Williamson Gallery and many other galleries nationwide. Prior to his design, Stephen Nowlin calculated the linear footage of wall space dedicated to each Art Center major, and that amount of wall space for each major was preserved in the new design. Thus the allocation of walls to different majors in the current gallery setup was largely determined 40 years ago by whomever made the decisions back then (likely Midge Quenell and Don Kubly).

2. Currently, the Hillside student gallery is based on an outdated model: the 1992 gallery makeover did not re-invent the space allocation for departments. Some current programs are not represented at all or with minimal space.

3. Spontaneous alternatives have appeared, such as the ad hoc transportation-design displays around their studio space (room 216) and the full-scale hallway tape drawings, the shop's hallway display cases, the movement of Illustration scholarship review into the public hallways, the outside-on-the-bridge product design crits, the Senior Show taking place each semester in multiple spaces, etc. These "visible process" and "visible results" spaces function as galleries – we just haven't thought of them in that way. At south campus opportunities are pretty open, since it is such a transitional environment.

B. Purpose: The job of the student galleries at ArtCenter is to represent student work; and the purpose of the student galleries is to represent the departments. The job is to present the high quality of student work, which has always been our selling point.

4. Goals and questions going forward

A. The student galleries and galleries within the various campuses need to be reorganized, and the space redistributed in a more equitable way.

B. There is a need for a space in which we tell the story of ArtCenter’s history and showcase the work of notable alumni. This is something other schools do to promote themselves – why are we selling ourselves short when we have this incredible history?

C. The Mullin Gallery’s program and mission have yet to be defined. It needs to be a fully funded and staffed enterprise.

D. The goals of the Pedagogical Spaces are determined by the departments that use them.
E. The goals of the Digital Spaces need to be thought through and developed in a holistic approach, something not currently done.

F. Is there a need for a welcoming space for alumni connected to this? (An alumni lounge, message center.)

G. Would our students benefit from a store that sells student work? In the past, there have been the ArtCenter 100 student sales. Fine Arts is currently working with Development to organize a student sale to start fund-raising; and Grad Fine Art is partnering with undergrad Fine Art to publish prints by alumni and faculty, also to raise funds for scholarship.

H. Is there a possibility of an off-campus site in which to present student work?

III. Recommendations

Immediate:

1. The college’s approach to exhibitions needs to be formalized as to the purposes of and resources for these spaces. The spaces need to have appropriate staffing and budgeting allocated to them, and they need to be coordinated with the other departments that will be using them (i.e., Admissions, Development).

2. The South Campus will become the center of most people’s experience of ArtCenter in the future. As that develops, there needs to be a second student gallery, representing all departments, at the South Campus. While this is something that would probably not be built for a few years, it needs to be included in the planning that is currently underway for South Campus.

Within the next two years:

1. Oversight of exhibitions spaces, two proposals:
   A. A central person who coordinates all spaces. This would not be a curatorial position but rather a coordinator. This is not something that should be simply added to Stephen Nowlin’s job description.
   B. Rather than a stereotypical central management with a senior school-wide person "in charge" (i.e., Proposal A), we might instead embrace the idea that local sections of the school should be able to manage both the curation and budgeting of those spaces themselves. These spaces should be actually funded (not hugely funded but at least funded rather than spare-change'd), budgeted and curatorially-managed by the separate departments. A "Coordinated Exhibitions" committee would be made up of reps from each of the local spaces and appropriate staff (e.g., PR and Development), meeting on a regular basis to know what everyone is doing and anticipating problems, opportunities, overlaps, efficiencies, and synergies. The responsibility for organizing this committee would rest with the existing Exhibitions Department (Stephen Nowlin, V.P.) The committee’s mission would be to avoid having these spaces become adversaries in competing for college resources and instead encourage their enterprise as both independent spaces and collegial partners. In addition, the existing Exhibition
Department would make available installation-labor and assistance to all these spaces, according to an increased budget for that purpose.

2. The student galleries need to be reorganized with an equitable distribution of space. The space at Hillside needs to be completely rethought, from the ground up, with all departments represented. It also needs to be a more open and inviting space.

Within the next five years:

1. We need a more formalized collection of data, documenting of exhibitions. Currently this is done in very scattered fashion, and much that we could use to promote the school goes undocumented. There is a crucial need to rehire a staff photographer to work with the school archivist (Robert Dirig).