LibArt: A Model for Exhibiting Student Art in Academic Libraries
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PROGRAM OVERVIEW:
In 2010 the University of Kansas Libraries established the Art Advisory Committee and commenced the inaugural year of the Libraries student art show called "LibArt: Student Art in the Libraries." The LibArt show displays art in a range of media by NU students from any major. Four physical galleries and two virtual displays exhibit student art in public areas of several campus libraries. LibArt is a rotating exhibition which kicks off in the fall semester and ends before finals in the spring semester. Throughout this annual cycle, the committee members manage all aspects of the show: the open call for submissions, promotion, selecting works, installation, and installation judging and awards. A decade later, the program remains highly popular with library employees, who enjoy seeing new art on their library spaces, and with students and teaching faculty who appreciate having an exhibition venue for student art.

CHALLENGES:
PROMOTING THE CALL FOR ENTRIES:
It can be difficult to compete with other campus advertisements.
• Some current and future solutions: ask teaching faculty to promote participation directly to students; in class, faculty could potentially set aside class credit if the committee could choose to offer small prizes to winning artists in future cycles.

GETTING THE ART:
A percentage of the accepted works will not show up during drop-off. Also, some works may or may not be able to be displayed due to incompatibility with the hanging equipment.
• Solutions include: a list of follow-up emails to those artists who are not chosen for the exhibit, providing them with an opportunity to share their work with a wider audience.

STORAGE AND SAFETY OF THE ART:
The art needs to be stored in a secure area and stay reasonably safe from damage or theft during transportation and display.
• Storage solutions: coordinating temporary storage spaces in the libraries and ensuring that they are not easily accessible to others.

OUTCOMES:
• INCREASED ENGAGEMENT with the University Libraries by students, faculty, and staff.

THE ANNUAL LIBART CYCLE

January
• Send surveys to student artists in the current show and collect feedback.
• Set a deadline for entries to the next show (usually occurs during the first week in April).

February
• Finalize promotion plan which generally includes posters, flyers, table tents, emails, and digital signs.
• Prepare and distribute physical and digital promotional materials.
• Open the call for entries.

March
• Close the call for entries.
• Committee members meet to evaluate and select the works to be included in the show; students can submit up to five works, so at least one work from every student is accepted unless it doesn’t conform to display requirements, such as works that are too large, heavy, or reliant on equipment that the library does not own. Typically around 80-100 works are submitted and about 35% of the works are accepted to the show.
• Send acceptance emails to the students.
• Deinstall the art from the current show and organize it for pick up by the students.

April
• Remind students to drop off works for the upcoming show by the end of finals week.
• Check that new works are ready to hang as they come in.
• Remind students to pick up works from the recently deinstalled show by the end of finals week.

May
• Install the physical exhibits and activate the digital exhibitions.

June
• Create layouts for the art in each gallery space.
• Create labels for each work.
• Create updated signs for each gallery.
• Create digital slideshows for the digital exhibitions.

July
• Hold the opening reception and awards ceremony.
• Add stickers to the labels of the winning artworks to indicate the awards received.

August
• Contact judges and coordinate judging of the works in the newly installed show.

September
• Update the LibArt website with the names of the artists in each exhibition location.

October
• Email each student artist with the locations of their works.
• Send out invites to the opening reception and awards ceremony.

November
• Send acceptance emails to the students.
• Deinstall the art in the current show and organize it for pick up by the students.

December
• Close the call for entries.

Additional Resources:
LibArt Website: https://lib.ku.edu/libart