

CALL FOR PROPOSALS GUIDELINES



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Submission Rolling
Call To: ARTISTS AND CURATORS

INTRODUCTION

The mission of Alabama Contemporary is to support cultural production, provide space for courageous conversations that shape identity, and seed growth in the greater creative economy. We support living artists, and through our educational, public and curatorial programs advocate for human dignity and a diversity of perspectives. We strive to be a partner, resource and light in the Deep South.

Founded in 1999, Alabama Contemporary Art Center is a non-profit contemporary arts center previously located on Cathedral Square in the heart of Mobile's historic downtown district. We fulfill our mission, in part, by commissioning new work from Living Artists and creating opportunities for artists to take risks and explore divergent paths in their practice. A large part of our mission has to do with the social, political and cultural relevance of the projects we support. Through the art of our time we aim to be a catalyst for positive change in our community.

Beginning in 2025 our schedule is fully transient, meaning we are supporting project proposals that either utilize untraditional space, public space, or can exist in community partnership State-wide. We are partnering with other institutions to house traditional exhibitions, occupying untraditional spaces in bold new ways, and hosting pop-ups and programs to continue our mission while our gallery is under renovations. A new section has been added to the proposal process that covers your proposed work's relationship to site. Click [here](#) to read the official press release about our upcoming changes.

We have three core proposal categories to submit work under:

GUEST CURATOR PROGRAM

State-Wide | Thematic Group Exhibitions | Temporary Public Art | Multi-Site Festivals

Alabama Contemporary is seeking guest curators and artists with exhibition concepts or independent projects to contribute directly to our community. There are a limited number of exhibition spots each year. **Our aim is to feature projects that show a fresh take on themes that are pertinent to our region.**

Guest Curated exhibitions are most likely to be sited in institutional partnership, but projects that occupy multiple sites or deal with the Alabama landscape through site-specificity will be particularly competitive.

Although we expect the bulk of these projects to take the form of thematic group exhibitions, limited room will be made for stand-alone projects, satellite, and solo exhibitions. Individual Artists wishing to propose their own work should submit to either Independent Projects or the Civil Rights and Cultural Heritage District Proposal processes.

INDEPENDENT PROJECTS

State-Wide | Temporary Public Art | Site-Specific Installation | Social Practice | Interdisciplinary

Alabama Contemporary is open to artists with site-specific project concepts, temporary public art, or new work as it is relevant to the community we serve. These project proposals follow a similar format to our Guest Curator requirements and are selected as they fit our mission, schedule and space. There are a limited number of exhibition spots each year and limited space. **Our aim is to support**

projects that represent a new direction in an artist's work, engage with topical concerns relevant to contemporary culture, and/or directly engage with the local community.

Artists can propose a solo project or collaborate in a group proposal of two or more. Collectives can propose together but should identify one point of contact able to manage all communication with the group.

CIVIL RIGHTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE DISTRICT

Local | Temporary Public Art | Site-Specific Installation | Social Practice | Interdisciplinary

In early 2024 The Mobile County Commission (MCC) commissioned a **Civil Rights and Cultural Heritage District Master Plan**. The master plan is a future-facing project that touchstones off of the civil rights movement heyday on Historic Davis Avenue– but it maps in the complex histories both before and after that movement to look towards a new possible future. The larger plan's goal is to fuel efforts to revitalize several historically Black Neighborhoods and historical sites throughout Mobile. Namely:

- Historic Davis Avenue/ MLK Avenue
- The Campground
- The Bottom
- Plateau and Africatown

We are seeking social practice and temporary public art projects that address the histories embedded in our landscape, and engage the local Mobile community. Our goal is to support four projects per year. The selection process will prioritize BIPOC southern artists based on the caliber and relevance of their work. Additional local partners will be added to each project based on the project's needs and scope. The review committee will select projects based on a grading rubric that grades critical merit, social relevance, and feasibility.

More information about the Civil Rights and Cultural Heritage District Plan can be found there: <https://www.mobilecountyal.gov/crch-master-plan>

WHO CAN APPLY

The Call for Proposals (CFP) process is open to any artist(s) or curator with a contemporary art exhibition or independent project that may fit our curatorial aim, schedule and space. There are a limited number of project spots each year and limited exhibition space. Proposals are reviewed separately as either a New Media proposal, through the Guest Curator program as an independent Project Proposal and may be subject to committee review as they are received (allow for a four week turnaround) and selection is made on a project to project basis.

In an effort to open the door and to keep the proposal and exhibition process collaborative, we have intentionally kept the parameters loose and the structure moveable. The CFP is the first step in creating an ongoing dialogue with our staff and community. Our primary interest is in growing the creative voice of the artists and curators we work with while directly engaging the local community.

This CFP is intended for artists and independent curators from any location and at any level of their career. Curators may be fully employed at other institutions, however, they should not approach this process as part of their full-time employment but as an independent project. Exceptions apply if the curator is submitting on behalf of their organization or institution, or if an arrangement is made between Alabama Contemporary and the employing organization or institution prior to the proposal process.

PROPOSAL CRITERIA

Vision

Our goal is to inject new voices into the cultural landscape of the Gulf Coast. In all our projects we are looking for a fresh take on themes that are pertinent to our region. Specifically we are looking for proposals that address:

- Community building
- Cultural Health
- Equity
- Environment
- Gender identity
- Intersectionality
- Marginalized voices
- Southern Identity
- Underserved populations

In line with our mission, preference will be given to projects that incorporate a strong social practice and/or element of community engagement. We are open to any medium or material culture that a curatorial aim might incorporate, given that it demonstrates 'the art of our time'. We consider exhibition programming and events to be part of any curatorial undertaking and will work with you to develop programmatic elements to a static exhibition that shows high potential for community engagement and programs.

Site

Successful proposals will address the site parameters of proposed work. This can be either a fixed point or location or a set of site needs that is open but shows you have thought through the kinds of site that would work best. Within the context of these applications, the intended site or location should ultimately extend the meaning of the work, directly connect to core themes, or connect the work to an intended audience.

Timetable

Projects are generally planned for a **3-month exhibition** timeline. We prefer to start the process at least two years in advance to allow plenty of time to develop ideas, troubleshoot, and fundraise. Install deadlines are always the first of the month and public openings are always the second Friday of the month. Please include any scheduling considerations or concerns in your proposal.

Selection Process

CFP Proposals are reviewed either by committee or staff as they are received and selection is made on a project-to-project basis. We engage committee members and artists relevant to the proposal up for review as needed. If a proposal requires more information, the applicant will be contacted and the proposal will not be considered complete until all necessary information is gathered. Within four weeks of submission of a complete proposal, a review will be scheduled. If a review for a completed proposal appears to need more than 4 weeks, the applicant will be notified.

The selection process takes into consideration certain **assessment criteria** in addition to the vision and overarching program aims outlined above. The criteria by which proposals are assessed are:

- Overall cultural or community relevance
- Artistic merit
- Critical value
- Clarity of ideas
- Accessibility
- Feasibility

DEFINING QUESTIONS:

Cultural or Community RELEVANCE

- Is the content of this exhibition closely related to concerns or experiences in this community?
- Who will find this work the most meaningful?
- Is this exhibition appropriate for the current cultural moment?

Artistic MERIT

- Does this work show a high level of skill?
- Does the work show a high level of consideration to form?
- Is there a strong aesthetic to this body of work?

CRITICAL VALUE

- Is the content of this exhibition thoughtful?
- Is the content of this exhibition well researched, or does it show a critical engagement with culture?

CLARITY of ideas in proposal/exhibition concept

- Does the proposal give me a concrete sense of what will be in the exhibition?
- Do I have a clear idea of what the curator/artist(s) is(are) going for?

FEASIBILITY

- Is the budget reasonable?
- Is the scale of this exhibition serviceable?
- Do you see any insurmountable hurdles?

If we can provide clarity for any of these terms, we strongly encourage you to come to an information session or call and inquire directly.

Submitting a Proposal:

FIRST STEP:

Submit a Letter of Inquiry

a Letter of Inquiry should outline the basic concept of your exhibition in **one page** (doc or pdf) via email to tyrese@alabamacontemporary.org. Make sure your letter includes:

- A short artist or curatorial statement (150-300 words)
- Information on the proposed work or the scale of the project
- Information on Site or intended location
- An estimated budget
- Contact information
- A link to a website

Feel free to include images so long as the document does not exceed one page. If your Letter of Inquiry matches our program vision and seems feasible we will send you a link to complete a Full Proposal.

SECOND STEP:

Full Project Proposal - 10 pages maximum, PDF format and online form process

Proposals should be submitted in a PDF format via a google form link sent following a successful Letter of Inquiry. Strong proposals address assessment criteria, the vision of the project, questions of capacity, scale, and feasibility. Assessment criteria should be addressed in the project narrative and is listed in the Selection Process section of this document.

Be sure your proposal includes:

- A Working Title and Curatorial Aim
- Project Narrative or Artist Statement
- A List of Artists/ Works or Scope (If you have specific work in mind please include links to websites or portfolio information)
- Physical description of the work or works (size, materials, space required in square or linear(running) feet, or technical attributes.
- A section addressing site specify or the work's relationship to its location
- Visual Documentation*
- A Budget*

Visual Documentation*

Visual material should be included in proposal PDF and formatted to include contextual information (source, artist, media etc). Images should be no smaller than 4 by 6 inches on an 8.5 by 11 inch page. If you have specific works in mind for a group exhibition, please specify whether images are examples of the artists "in general" or actual works for the exhibition. For all images, please include **artist, title, media, and dimensions, date**. Images of past exhibitions you have curated are also helpful.

If your proposal is successful, an Inventory Template will be provided to list all individual works for the exhibition. We do not ask you to create a full inventory of works until the proposal review process is complete and successful.

Budget Template and Benchmarks**:

Below is a template for project budget categories. We pay W.A.G.E. rate honorariums on all projects that set a minimum. All other costs should be separate from the honorarium, it is not expected that direct project expenses come out of it.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	EXPENSE
Artist Honorariums	Artist 1	\$1,500
	Artist 2	\$1,500
Material Expenses	Lumber, wire, fabric, confetti	\$3,500
Travel	3 Trips Regional Travel, \$350 per	\$1,050
Shipping	4 Paintings to be shipped	\$750
TOTAL		\$8,300

W.A.G.E. STANDARDS:

Solo Exhibition-	\$1600
Solo Project- Commission of new work	\$1000
2-Person Exhibition-	\$775/Artist
Group Exhibition, 3 - 5 Artists-	\$400/Artist
Group Exhibition, 6+ Artists-	\$250/Artist
Performance of Existing Work-	\$500
Performance, Commission of New Work-	\$1000 (additional)
Solo Screening with In-Person Appearance-	\$165
Day Rate for Performers-	\$25/hour or \$125/day, whichever is higher

If your proposal is strong but we lack funding for it we may enlist you in the fundraising process. If you have initial thoughts on possible funding sources please let us know in the proposal.

d. Timeline including possible programming of space

e. Supporting Documents

For Artists and Independent Curators

- A professional curriculum vitae (CV)
- An artist biography outlining artistic career, including achievements and interests
- Any other information you deem useful

For Organizations

- Mission
- Biographies of key personnel
- List of board of directors
- Organizational History

We may ask for more information regarding your proposal before scheduling a review. Submitting a proposal does not guarantee that we will take on your project. If it is rejected by the committee, we will do our best to explain why your proposal was not successful. There is no limit of proposals you may submit each year, so please feel free to submit new ideas as your process evolves if your first submission was unsuccessful.

If you have questions please contact:

Allison Schaub Skoda

Curator

allison@alabamacontemporary.org

251.208.5657

Next Steps

We approach the exhibition process as collaborative. Submitting a proposal is the first step in beginning an ongoing dialog with our staff and community. You will work directly with our Director of Exhibitions and staff to ensure the success of your project and vision. At any stage of the process, your project may face issues of feasibility that affect the content, timeline, or budget. The success of your proposal does not guarantee the success of your overall project. Either party may opt out of the project prior to the signing of a formal contract. Below is an overview of what to expect:

Milestones

- Proposal Review Committee Notification - via email or call
- Meeting Scheduled (to make first contact with staff assigned to the project)
- Signing of a **Letter of Intent**
- Site or Locations defines, Partners enlisted (if applicable)
- Approval of Work
- Budget Established
- Board Review of Exhibition with Final Budget (ACAC Staff)
- Formalized Contract, presented with Final Budget and Schedule of Deadlines - presented and signed
- Installation Scheduled (ACAC staff)

Guest Curator/ Artist Responsibilities

- Select works with approval from and collaboration with ACAC
- Complete an Object Inventory, provide accurate crediting information for all works
- Identify authorized lenders and verify ownership of works selected
- Manage Shipping, install expense and Artist Fees in final budget, scaling projects to stay within budget if needed
- Work with ACAC on making all shipping and receiving arrangements
- Troubleshoot and plan site-specific projects
- On-site for install to make major arrangement and layout decisions
- Write exhibition text and didactic material for use by ACAC
- Provide biographical information to ACAC for the promotion of the exhibition
- To give at least one 'Curator's Tour' as a public program during the exhibition

Alabama Contemporary Best Practices

- Alabama Contemporary should provide a prospectus that clearly outlines the application procedure and the respective responsibilities of the venue and the curator/artists should they be accepted.
- Accepted artists will be provided with a written agreement (Letter of Intent) that clearly outlines the respective responsibilities of the venue, the curator, and the artists.
- While artwork is in the possession of Alabama Contemporary, it will be insured by the exhibition venue against theft, loss, and damage.
- A final budget with any compensation to be made will be negotiated prior to the signing of any contractual agreement.