

How Can Your Exhibit Promote Community Service and Advocacy?

Art has a unique capability of being an engaging vehicle for change, as well as, aesthetically and intellectually interesting. Although Gallery 234 encourages strictly fine art exhibits, because we are an entity of the Campus Activities Center, artwork that demonstrates social responsibility, advocacy, or change is particularly compelling. Gallery 234 aims to promote artwork as a tool for community service and advocacy outreach. Below are some examples of how art has been used in this capacity in the past. For more information, please contact the gallery coordinator at vca@uwyo.edu.

The subject forms the art:

In October 2010, Gallery 234 commissioned a photographer to travel to New Orleans to photograph the city's progress five years after Hurricane Katrina. The photos were hung in the gallery, each with a small statement about the scene that allowed the audience to understand the magnitude of the scene. The artist then chose to donate half of the profit from the sale of the artwork to a charity in New Orleans. This type of project targets an issue and then creates art around that focus.

Art as a gateway to advocacy:

In September of 2014, the Registered Student Organization Real Women Real Bodies displayed a series of nude portraiture in silhouette. The organization's goal was to promote self-acceptance, celebrate individuality and battle the harmful effects of beauty ideals. The exhibit garnered a vast amount of attention including stories on Cosmopolitan.com and [Huffington Post](http://HuffingtonPost.com) online. The club used the gallery show as a kick-off to lectures and other events. RWRB continues their campaign for social change with national attention.

Art with an environmental purpose:

In the spring of 2013, Gallery 234 hosted a series about the Andros Islands, where all donations and proceeds from selling the photographs were donated to ANCAT, the Andros Conservancy and Trust agency. ANCAT works to protect, preserve, enhance, and restore the natural resources of the islands and marine environment. Gallery 234 has hosted an array of exhibits with a strong theme toward environmental conservation and education.

Art collaborations:

In many instances, Gallery 234 has worked with outside organizations to create complimentary events. For example, in spring of 2011, Gallery 234 worked with the SLCE (Service through Leadership and Civic Engagement) office on campus to display the work of the Beehive Collective, a group of artists who work to use their art as tools to advocate for issues throughout the world. In conjunction with the gallery exhibit, the SLCE office hosted members of the Beehive Collective in a roundtable discussion of how art can be a tool for change.

Art that provides a direct benefit to the community:

In spring of 2011, Visual and Cultural Arts (the program that oversees Gallery 234) hosted a series of workshops to create blankets for Project Linus, a nonprofit organization that provides handmade blankets to children who are very ill or have experienced other trauma. The gathering and crafting directly served the community. Any project that focuses on using an art form to directly benefit others, or advocate for the benefit of others is a wonderful complement to our gallery and its mission. Please contact the gallery coordinator if you wish to host an event such as this.