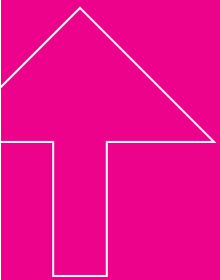


ARTS & EXHIBITS

AT DC PUBLIC
LIBRARY



The following pages are an excerpt from the DC Public Library Art and Exhibits plan, first released in 2020. The updated plan will be made available on dclibrary.org.

The DC Public Library would like to acknowledge the many artists, curators, and community members that contributed to the development of this document. This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



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DC Public Library Art & Exhibits Plan Project Team

Linnea Hegarty, Director of Development, Exhibits and Events

Ryan McCoy, Library Design and Visual Appearance Coordinator

Monica Miller, Public Affairs Specialist

Project Consultant:

Natalie Campbell

Design and Strategy:

Cory Bernat

WHY NOW? THE NEED FOR A PLAN



The West End Library, designed by architect Enrique Norten of Ten Arquitectos, opened in 2017 through a successful public-private partnership.



The award-winning Francis A. Gregory Neighborhood Library, by Adjaye Associates and Wiencek Associates, opened in 2012. Photo: Maxine Schnitzer.

These libraries exemplify the DC Public Library's commitment to rebuilding, renovating, and refurbishing its physical campus to meet the current and future needs of residents.

Over the last ten years, many cultural institutions have been re-thinking the traditional visitor experience, and finding new ways to engage audiences as cultural participants, not passive consumers. Public art, too, once implied statues and murals: monumental, permanent works to be observed and appreciated from a distance. Today it can also mean performance, video, temporary installations, and more. At a time when cultural institutions are rethinking inclusion, public libraries offer a powerful opportunity to lower barriers to access. When DC Public Library supports cultural initiatives that engage participants directly—to interact, learn, share an experience, or create collaboratively—participation is widespread. D.C. residents appreciate timely and thought-provoking installations that blur the lines of art, history, and cultural production across disciplines. Art and exhibits offer limitless opportunities to deepen residents' understanding of themselves and their city, and to support the Library's vital mission of engaging minds and elevating the quality of life in the District.

Ten years ago, after years of budget reductions, the District of Columbia made the DC Public Library system a priority through the investment or allocation of more than \$500 million for new or renovated buildings. Obsolete and poorly maintained library buildings across the District have been replaced with exciting and award-winning architectural landmarks. As of March 2020, the District now enjoys 19 new or renovated neighborhood libraries with three more in the design or construction phase. The Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Library, designed by Mies Van der Rohe and opened in 1972, is currently undergoing a \$211 million renovation that will provide residents and visitors with a world class central library.

Community Engagement

Along with the investment in infrastructure, DC Public Library has conducted in-depth community engagement to fully understand how to make the central and 25 neighborhood libraries an exciting resource reflecting the communities they serve. In preparing the Library's Strategic Plan and Facilities Master Plan, the Library collected the ideas and opinions of almost 4,000 District residents from across the city.



Staff and students who participated in a Sign of the Times Cultural Workshop, in partnership with CulturalDC in front of portable Hunger Wall Mural by 411 Collective at Benning (Dorothy I. Height) Neighborhood Library, July 2018.

77% of neighborhood libraries currently have artwork installed. Regular arts programming includes music, theater, and more, with a strategy underway for increased offerings.

What we heard...

DC Public Library has data supporting the fact that residents want libraries that serve as creative and cultural hubs of local neighborhoods. During the strategic planning process, 44% of users and non-users said that they would travel to library branches not their own to attend cultural programs and literary events, and 38% would travel for local DC history programs and exhibits. While over 75 percent of D.C.'s neighborhood libraries currently have permanent artwork installed, D.C. residents desire—and deserve—art and exhibits throughout the Library's physical campus.



The Francis A. Gregory Library features beautiful lampshades hand-made by Senegalese basket weavers. Photo (above): Adjaye Associates. Photo (below): Maxine Schnitzer.



...more Art!

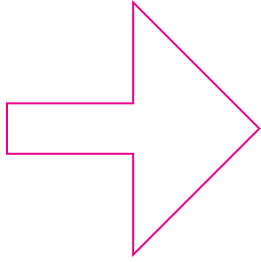
...add art and sculptures to the Great Hall.

...art installations inside and out.

...community curated exhibit space.

...host local art shows in the lobby.

**COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUP COMMENTS
FROM THE MLK LIBRARY COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT PROCESS, 2014**

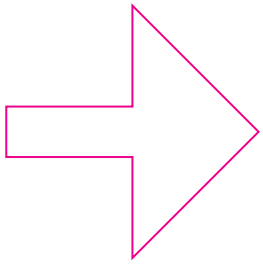


DC PUBLIC LIBRARY'S VISION FOR ART AND EXHIBITS

The DC Public Library celebrates art and exhibits as a source of learning, discovery, growth, and connection. The Art and Exhibits Program at DC Public Library is a portal to the library's resources and a laboratory for engagement with Washington, D.C.'s past, present and future.

Every exhibit, installation, and cultural program is a chance to tell a story, inspire curiosity, and connect with audiences of all ages and abilities. Cultural initiatives have the power to capture the imagination of patrons through sense and emotion, creating new opportunities and connecting them more deeply to Library resources and to the District.

Art & Exhibits are an integral part of the Library's effort to support a more equitable and engaged city. Throughout the Library, the Art and Exhibits program provides opportunities for community investment, enrichment, and connectedness.



GOALS

The Library's Art Program should...

- 1. Spark a love of books and learning.**
- 2. Capture imagination, inspire curiosity.**
- 3. Connect patrons to resources.**
- 4. Affirm local perspectives.**
- 5. Serve D.C. by supporting its creators.**
- 6. Strengthen D.C.'s cultural networks.**