



How to Curate a Stellar Exhibition

A memorable exhibition is more than art on walls. It is a clear idea, an intentional journey and an invitation for people to connect.



THE SEVEN-PART CURATORIAL FRAMEWORK

01 Begin with one powerful idea

Name the central question, tension or story. A vague premise creates a scattered experience.

02 Know the audience

Decide who the exhibition is for and what visitors should think, feel or discuss afterward.

03 Select with intention

Choose each work because it strengthens the story - not simply because it is available or attractive.

04 Build visual rhythm

Balance scale, color, medium, density and open space. Let every artwork breathe.

05 Shape the visitor journey

Plan the entrance, sequence, sightlines, turning points and final impression.

06 Add meaningful context

Use concise interpretation and programming to deepen understanding without competing with the art.

07 Plan the invisible work

Set the budget, timeline, loans, installation, promotion and responsibilities before opening day.

BEFORE YOU OPEN THE DOORS

- ☐ Focused curatorial statement
- ☐ Cohesive, edited artwork list
- ☐ Confirmed measurements and layout
- ☐ Artist agreements and loan details
- ☐ Installation and lighting plan
- ☐ Labels, signage and accessibility
- ☐ Marketing assets and opening plan

FOUR COMMON MISSTEPS

- Trying to include too many ideas
- Choosing work without a clear narrative
- Treating installation as an afterthought
- Planning promotion and programs too late

THE CURATOR'S TEST

Can every artistic, spatial and interpretive decision be traced back to the central idea? If not, edit again.

BRING YOUR EXHIBITION IDEA TO LIFE

Danielle Deery helps artists, organizations and creative spaces turn promising ideas into cohesive exhibitions, compelling proposals and meaningful visitor experiences.

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