

Proposal Example #3 – Art for Art's Sake

This is an edited version of a winning proposal submitted by the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art to the US Institute of Museum & Library Services (IMLS). IMLS made the proposal publicly available on its website.

1. Statement of Need

The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA) is a cultural leader in south central Wisconsin, serving the region with exceptional exhibition and outreach programming in a world-class facility. MMoCA was founded in 1901 as the Madison Art Association and evolved over a 103-year period from an interest group without a physical home to a community-based art center to an avant-garde regional museum. In 2004, the museum embarked on a new transformation to meet demands for a larger facility with a significantly upgraded public amenities and back-of-house spaces.

MMOCA's new Cesar Pelli-designed facility opened in Madison's Overture Center for the Arts in 2006. This 51,000-sq foot building allowed the museum to more than double annual attendance in its first year to 200,000 and to take public programming to a new level. The space has proven particularly apt for the museum's exhibitions, allowing MMoCA to redefine and expand efforts and to work with new partners worldwide to organize and travel significant exhibition projects. The building's larger, more flexible spaces, built explicitly for the display of modern and contemporary artwork, have vastly increased the museum's ability to accommodate significant 2-D and 3-D work. For instance, the current exhibition, *George Segal: Street Scenes*, could not have been installed in the old space due to weight restrictions. Other recent projects, such as *Chuck Close: Process and Collaboration*, *Jasper Johns: The Prints*, and *LeWitt x 2* would also not have been possible due to the sheer volume and size of works in these exhibitions.

MMoCA's new space has allowed the museum to explore new exhibition directions and has also allowed the museum to re-imagine long-standing traditions, including the museum's *Wisconsin Triennial*. The *Triennial* is widely regarded as the state's most prestigious showcase of contemporary Wisconsin visual art and is respected by artists, critics, and audiences for its balanced selection of innovative artistic expression and thorough, yet open, jury process. The *Triennial* is typically organized every 3 years and invites any artist engaged in the art making process, including college and university students, to apply. The 2007 *Triennial*—the 11th presentation of the exhibition and the first in MMoCA's new home—received almost 500 applications. Through a two-tiered process of artwork evaluation and studio visits, the curatorial team culled this group down to 43 artists and 125 artworks to best represent the state of contemporary art making across Wisconsin.

The 2007 *Wisconsin Triennial* gave the museum the opportunity to use its new space to full potential by displaying more works per artist than in past years, selecting works made on an ambitious scale, making full use of the new media gallery for film and video work, and incorporating site-specific installations into public spaces such as the lobby and rooftop sculpture garden. The exhibition was favorably received by critics and media and drew a large audience of 44,000 on-site visitors, including more than 2,000 on opening night! Many patrons took advantage of related exhibition programming and thousands left with a copy of the exhibition brochure/poster. Perhaps because of this vivacity, excitement, and success, it was easy to overlook the fact that the reach of the exhibition was limited to 51,000 square feet in downtown Madison, Wisconsin.

Exhibition projects such as the *Wisconsin Triennial* are the heart of the museum's operations and fulfill its mission to "serve the art life of the community by creating opportunities for direct experience with works of art, by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas about art, and by offering programs to enhance the appreciation and understanding of art." Looking ahead to the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial*, MMoCA recognizes a tremendous opportunity to move beyond the physical walls of the museum and to build on traditional didactic tools to further fulfill each aspect of its mission using new strategies and new technologies. MMoCA is requesting \$55,030 from IMLS to support an innovative presentation of the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* that

vastly expands outreach efforts and audiences for this important staple of the museum's programming. Using an enhanced Internet presence, Web 2.0 platforms such as blogs, Facebook and Flickr, cell phone audio guide technology, and some low-tech initiatives like off-site lectures across the state, MMoCA will take steps to fulfill its mission with an entirely redesigned approach to exhibition-based communication and outreach.

The 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* is an appropriate project for strategic audience expansion due to its inherent mission to act as a statewide survey. But the project will ultimately serve as a springboard for ongoing initiatives in this area, not just an isolated effort. Audiences are migrating toward new forms of information gathering, learning, and social interaction, and museums worldwide have identified and responded to the shift. To continue to effectively serve audiences and meet its own goals, MMoCA also needs to make this shift. Importantly, the plans outlined in this proposal for the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* will help the museum meet many of the objectives outlined in its most recent strategic plan, including the following goals:

- 1) "We have significantly established MMoCA in the eyes of leading (established and emerging) artists and collectors, and within the greater art world." MMoCA has made great strides toward this goal, enticing exciting emerging artists such as Alyson Shotz and Barbara Probst to work with the museum, and organizing major traveling exhibitions such as *Le Wittx 2* and *George Segal: Street Scenes*. Prominent collectors have made significant recent gifts to the museum, including works by Andy Warhol, Robert Rauschenberg, and Ellsworth Kelly. But, to continue to stay top-of-mind, MMoCA must keep up with industry standards in the realms of outreach and technology. It will be important for MMoCA to be viewed as a leader, rather than a straggler in this area.
- 2) "By retaining current and long-time supporters and reaching out to new ones, we will broaden and deepen our audiences, attendance, and membership, and assure the museum's continued financial success." MMoCA works diligently and creatively to steward its current stakeholders and to attract new ones, although these efforts have traditionally been limited to on-site visitors and regional residents. MMoCA recognizes that, using Internet technology, social networking platforms, and other Web 2.0 initiatives, the museum can begin to interact with audiences literally around the world. Younger audiences, in particular, are identified as perpetually connected through online communities. If MMoCA hopes to grow this important element of its audience, it will need to connect with these younger community members in the virtual spaces where they are most comfortable.

As described in the attached Strategic Plan Summary, MMoCA's most recent strategic planning process took place in late 2006/early 2007 and involved museum staff, board members, and museum volunteers. The process generated an ambitious plan with several umbrella goals and multiple measures of success followed by specific desired outcomes for museum departments. Ongoing evaluation of progress toward strategic plan goals is an integrated element of MMoCA's day-to-day operations and often leads to new directions for museum programs and events. Plans for the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* are a direct result of this ongoing evaluation and response process.

2. Project Plan

The 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* is an ambitious project that involves, on some level, every staff member at the museum. To organize the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial*, the museum will draw on an experienced staff, best industry practices, a long history of jurying and presenting *Triennial* exhibitions, and lessons learned during the 2007 *Wisconsin Triennial*, the museum's first in its new space. The project timeline includes the following major activities: *September 2009*: call for entries deadline; *October 2009*: initial application review; *November-December 2009*: studio visits to second-round artists; final list of participating artists and checklist determined; *January-April 2010*: installation and publication planning and implementation; *May-August 2010*: *Wisconsin Triennial* open to the public.

Beyond these basics of exhibition design and implementation, the new focus of the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* lays beyond on-site installation. MMoCA plans to significantly expand the reach and impact of the *Triennial* among statewide audiences and to attract diverse new audiences locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally through the *Triennial's* online presence. New initiatives for the 2010 *Triennial* include:

- **Use SlideRoom, a web-based application platform,** to further diversify the applicant pool for the *Triennial*. In prior years, reach to applicants was limited to mail, word-of-mouth and "buzz." A web-based application will reach artists in more remote areas of the state and will simplify the process through on-line submissions.
- **Offer a broader geographic presentation of the *Wisconsin Triennial* with off-site lectures in communities beyond Madison.** MMoCA plans to partner with University of Wisconsin system campuses to present artist talks in their home communities. This will allow MMoCA to connect with new audiences statewide who may not have a chance to see the *Triennial* in Madison. The museum will record artist talks on the road and at the museum for online distribution.
- **Broaden the reach of the *Triennial* through a rich online exhibition.** Museums worldwide, including MMoCA, have embraced the web as an effective medium to share and interpret artworks. MMoCA's *Starry Transit* (<http://www.mmoca.org/starrytransit/>) and *Modern Art/Contemporary Art/MMoCA Collects* (<http://www.mmoca.org/mmocacollects/>) websites have successfully enabled online audiences to explore MMoCA offerings. While MMoCA cannot currently allocate necessary resources to develop a web-based exhibition to complement every on-site exhibition, the *Triennial* is an ideal candidate for such an investment. A web presence allows MMoCA to truly bring this statewide survey of contemporary art to the entire state at a reasonable cost. While not a substitute for a trip to the museum, a vibrant web presence allows those who can't make it to the *Triennial* in person to explore participating artists, their work, and their ideas. A consultant will be hired to maximize the website in this area; she will conceive and design the site and its content and will also record artists to provide first-person narrative as a resource on the site. A *Wisconsin Triennial* website will have a permanent home on MMoCA's home page and will offer a lasting record of contemporary Wisconsin artwork, particularly as content from future *Triennial* exhibitions is added. Finally, a *Wisconsin Triennial* website will offer a jumping-off point for other Internet-based opportunities surrounding the exhibition, including bios, YouTube posts, and social networking profiles.
- **Recognize the potential of digital media (which accounted for more than 20% of 2007 *Triennial* works) to be exhibited in virtual spaces worldwide.** MMoCA's curatorial staff will work with artists and the web consultant to offer digital media through its own website or a third-party site such as YouTube. This will allow audiences anywhere to experience the *Triennial* much like actual visitors to the museum. The curatorial staff will also increase excitement and credibility of web-based media in the *Triennial* by commissioning web-based projects in addition to site-specific 2-D and 3-D projects.
- **Create a more satisfying on-site experience with cell phone-guided audio tours.** *Triennial* exhibitions often include challenging works addressing complex social issues. In addition to extended label copy and an illustrated brochure, visitors will benefit from first-person artist and curatorial insights delivered through their cell phones. MMoCA will use recorded artist content, collected as part of the website development project, to create an audio tour and to keep costs for the project modest. The use of cell phones rather than audio tour handheld devices will likely increase use of audio tours, particularly among younger audiences.
- **Incorporate Web 2.0 initiatives into the 2010 *Triennial*.** The Web 2.0 paradigm shift from static content to interactive participation offers numerous opportunities to engage audiences more deeply, to harness social networking to grow and diversify audiences, to generate candid feedback, and to create an audience-driven dialogue. For the 2010 *Triennial*, MMoCA will initiate artist and curator-authored blogs, use social networking sites such as Facebook to generate "buzz," and encourage use of audience-contributed content sites like Flickr and YouTube to capture new perspectives on the *Triennial*.
- **Develop a robust integrated marketing campaign to drive audiences to the on-site presentation of the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* and to generate virtual audiences.** MMoCA will make a significant investment in marketing the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* to a larger statewide audience as part of its effort to engage

Wisconsin residents beyond the greater Madison area. This will be particularly important in cities where MMoCA presents off-site lectures. The museum will also invest in a number of online advertising vehicles, both regionally specific, such as local newspaper sites, and international, such as artforum.com, to draw diverse audiences to the online components of the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial*.

3. Project Resources

The 2010 *Triennial* will be the most ambitious exhibition during the museum's 2011 fiscal year, filling the museum's large main galleries as well as the smaller State Street Gallery and adjacent public spaces. It is also one of the region's most high-profile exhibitions, demanding significant attention for artist and media relations. MMoCA allocates resource accordingly and has assigned approximately 1,400 hours of staff time to the project.

Wisconsin Triennial Key Staff-The *Wisconsin Triennial* has traditionally been curated by a team consisting of the museum's director, curator of exhibitions, and curator of education.

Jane Doe, curator of exhibitions: 400 hours for curatorial responsibilities and project management. Ms. Doe joined the MMoCA staff in 2004. She received her MA from Williams College in 2003. She has held curatorial positions at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art, Independent Curators International, and Minetta Brook. As curator of exhibitions, she manages the museum's exhibition programming in addition to organizing many of the museum's exhibitions. Recent projects include *Barbara Probst: Exposures* (2008); *George Segal: Street Scenes* (2008); and *T.L. Solien: Myths and Monsters* (2008).

Sharon Smith, curator of education: 220 hours for curatorial responsibilities and education program management. Ms. Smith has 17 years tenure at MMoCA. She holds a BFA and a master's degree from the University of Wisconsin in Arts Administration. She has co-curated several *Wisconsin Triennial* exhibitions as well as multiple youth-oriented exhibitions. She oversees all the museum's educational programming, including the docent training program, school tours, adult enrichment programs, and family workshops.

John Jones, director: 105 hours for curatorial responsibilities. Mr. Jones has served as MMoCA's director for 17 years, including responsibility for all administrative and artistic activities. He has co-curated numerous *Triennial* exhibitions, as well as significant projects such as *George Segal: Street Scenes* (2008); *Donald Lipski: A Brief History of Twine* (2000); and *Claes Oldenburg: Printed Stuff* (1991).

Staff members from the Registrar's Office, Technical Services Department, and Marketing Department will also make significant contributions and MMoCA will draw on its pool of interns (often students at the University of Wisconsin) to contribute to the project. The museum is particularly excited about the opportunity to work with interns on new media initiatives given their strong familiarity with Internet-based activities.

MMoCA will also engage a consultant to develop the museum's web presence for the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial*. Susan Long is an experienced museum and education communication consultant with experience at several arts and education organizations including Sheffield School of Interior Design, Art Institute of Chicago, and Encyclopedia Britannica Education Corporation. Her proposal anticipates work on the project for an equivalent of 29 full-time days. She will bring particular expertise to accomplish MMoCA's goal of including audio and video recordings of artists on the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* website.

Financial Resources

The museum's budget of \$132,010 for the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* is roughly 6.6% of the museum's total annual operating budget. Costs for the project are in line with other exhibition projects and MMoCA expects to take advantage of numerous low-cost and no-cost initiatives such as inexpensive Guide by Cell technology and free Web 2.0 platforms. While not an enormous allocation of funds, the project is significant and demands attention for fundraising and support activities. The museum feels confident that granting agencies

from the City and County will continue to support this project as they have in past years. The museum also hopes for repeat support from state-wide corporations such as the Alliant Energy Foundation and Associated Bank. Individual donors will also be approached and represent a staple of the museum's avant-garde exhibition funding. By investing significant resources in the 2010 *Triennial*, MMoCA looks forward to generating a return on investment through new audiences, new members, and potential new donors.

4. Impact

A grant from the IMLS for the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* will help ensure the 12th successful presentation of this respected survey of contemporary Wisconsin art. Through this exhibition, MMoCA expects to make a positive impact by accomplishing the following goals:

- Provide a diverse on-site audience of 50,000 visitors with a vibrant portrait of contemporary art-making in Wisconsin.
- Engage more than 500 adults and children with related education programs to connect them more deeply with the works on view.
- Raise the profile of the arts in Wisconsin by showcasing exemplary work from a wide range of established and emerging Wisconsin artists.
- Provide working artists with the significant opportunity to exhibit work in a major museum exhibition.
- Continue to trace the development of art in Wisconsin by acquiring select works from the 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* to add to the museum's permanent collection. This tradition has allowed MMoCA to be a significant repository of modern and contemporary art in the state.
- Create a record of the *Wisconsin Triennial* through the production of an exhibition brochure/poster; through photo documentation, and through an on-site comment book.

MMoCA also looks to the Triennial as an opportunity to push the boundaries of traditional outreach and employ new methods of communication and interaction with audiences. Specific goals in this area include:

- Engage 25,000 visitors on MMoCA's 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* website.
- Offer a deeper on-site visitor experience to 10,000 audience members using Guide by Cell audio technology.
- Engage 300 participants statewide at *Triennial* artist talks offered outside of Madison.
- Attract a minimum of 200 posts to *Triennial-related* blogs and web-based comment books.
- Engage 5,000 visitors through postings on Web 2.0 platforms including Flickr, YouTube, and Facebook.
- Track an increase in online membership purchases and donations as a result of increased web-based activity.

The museum will track hits to its Wisconsin Triennial website using Google Analytics and will use tracking mechanism through Web 2.0 platforms and Guide by Cell to gauge traffic. It will also gauge media reach for the exhibition and evaluate public reaction through all available feedback mechanisms. Following the presentation of the 2010 Triennial, staff will meet to evaluate qualitative and quantitative data and will use the data to determine how and where MMoCA will continue its broader outreach presence.

In a 2007 article on museums and Web 2.0, James Yasko writes that, "By encouraging staff to pursue new audiences, museums will open their virtual doors to the world and meet visitors on familiar ground." It's time for MMoCA to recognize that, while its physical museum space may be familiar ground to staff, current members, and repeat visitors, it is not familiar ground for thousands of potential visitors and supporters. To grow and thrive, MMoCA must take new risks and attempt new strategies for outreach and communication. The 2010 *Wisconsin Triennial* is a perfect vehicle for new initiatives and will serve as a playbook for ongoing planning in this realm while strengthening, deepening, and broadening audience relationships.

BUDGET FORM: Section B, Summary Budget

	\$ IMLS	\$ Cost Share	\$ TOTAL COSTS
1. Salaries & Wages	\$0.00	\$37,325.00	\$37,325.00
2. Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$9,330.00	\$9,330.00
3. consultant Fees	\$14,280.00	\$0.00	\$14,280.00
4. Travel	\$4,850.00	\$0.00	\$4,850.00
5. Supplies and Materials	\$21,000.00	\$0.00	\$21,000.00
6. Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
7. Student Support	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
8. Other Costs	\$14,900.00	\$30,325.00	\$45,225.00
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (1-8)	\$55,030.00	\$76,980.00	\$132,010.00
9. Indirect Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL COSTS (Direct and Indirect)	\$55,030.00	\$76,980.00	\$132,010.00

Project Funding for the Entire Grant Period

1. Grant Funds Requested from IMLS	\$55,030.00
2. Cost Sharing:	
a. Applicant's Contribution	\$30,325.00
b. Kind Contribution	\$46,655.00
c. Other Federal Agencies	\$0.00
d. TOTAL COST SHARING	\$76,980.00
3. TOTAL PROJECT FUNDING (1+2d)	\$132,010.00
Percentage of total project costs requested from IMLS	41.7%

* If funding has been requested from another federal agency, indicate the agency's name:

**Madison Museum of Contemporary Art
IMLS - Application November 2008
Project Schedule**