

PUBLIC ART

POLICY

Ridgewater College, hereinafter the College, recognizes that public art elevates and enriches campus spaces for our students, faculty, staff, and the broader community. Public art supports the college's educational, cultural, and creative mission by offering diverse, engaging, and thought-provoking works. This policy establishes consistent guidelines and practices for the acceptance, acquisition, display, storage, deaccessioning, and disposal of public art at Ridgewater College, and as well as a workgroup to manage said guidelines and practices.

The College's public art collection includes any item of art acquired for display on college premises including purchased, donated, and loaned art, including art obtained through the [Minnesota Percent for Art in Public Places Program](#) which are governed by Minnesota Administrative Rules, Section 1900.2210, [Additional Requirements and Processes for Minnesota Percent for Art in Public Places Program](#).

This policy does not apply to art, photographs, etc. that are the personal property of employees and placed or displayed in their workspaces or offices.

Oversight of the public art collection inventory shall be the responsibility of the Vice President of Finance and Operations or designee.

All final decisions and authority related to the acquisition, deaccession, and/or disposition of public art resides with the President.

Definition of Public Art

Public art for purposes of this policy is defined as art owned by the college and sited in public spaces at the college and includes art which is:

- Purchased by, donated, or on loan to the college, including Minnesota Percent for the Arts.
- Public art may include (but are not limited to):
 - Paintings and murals
 - Sketches, drawings, graphic arts, and prints
 - Sculptures
 - Photography
 - Video and electronic media
 - Objects in clay, fiber, textiles, wood, metal, plastic, and other material
 - Mixed or conceptual media, including collage

Public Art Installation Types

- Permanent: Permanent property of the College; installed for more than three years.
- Semi-Permanent: Property of the College; installed for a period of 1-3 years.
- Temporary: Not property of the College; installed for more than four weeks and less than one year.

PUBLIC ART

- Exhibits displayed less than four weeks, as well as art gallery programming, are exempt from this policy but must satisfy “Criteria and Procedures for Acceptance/Rejection of Public Art” (below) and related requirements of life safety, facilities, etc.

Placement of Public Art

Art designated for public viewing may be placed in public locations including lobbies, waiting rooms, hallways, conference rooms, theatres, gymnasiums, auditoriums, or widely accessible classrooms. For purposes of this policy, individual and/or private workspaces or offices are not considered public locations.

Ridgewater Public Art Workgroup (RPAW)

The purpose of Ridgewater College’s Public Art Workgroup (RPAW) is to enhance the campus environment by selecting, installing, maintaining, and overseeing the College’s public art collection, thereby enriching the educational and cultural environment of the college community. Through public art, RPAW strives to create a welcoming environment for people passing through public spaces, stimulate art-related dialogue among community members, challenge existing or pre-conceived perceptions of art, and illuminate diverse cultures and perspectives.

RPAW shall consist of up to ten members appointed by the President, and include administration, faculty, staff, and (if possible) students. The President shall name one of the following as chair:

- Vice President for Finance & Operations (or designee)
- Vice President of Enrollment and Advancement (or designee)
- Foundation Director

At least one member of RPAW shall be a faculty member from the art discipline or department, if possible.

The president has authority to appoint or hire an individual to serve as Steward of the collection, in cooperation with the RPAW and other appropriate college departments. The Steward’s responsibilities will be clearly defined upon appointment or hire, and may include some or all of the following: facilitating acquisition and installation; managing documentation and inventory; planning exhibitions; inspection, maintenance and repair; storage; and facilitating relocation or deaccession of public art on campus.

RPAW’s overall responsibilities shall include:

- Reviewing proposals for public art for recommendation of President approval, suggestion for modification, or rejection
- Ensuring the college’s Gift Acceptance Policy is followed for any donated public art.
- Identifying specific siting and/or re-siting opportunities
- Consulting and coordinating with appropriate departments (e.g., Foundation, facilities)
- Administering artwork loan agreements
- Ensuring proper maintenance and storage of public art
- Assessing and determining repair, deaccession, removal, or disposal needs for public art

Final decisions and authority on the acquisition, relocation, deaccession, and disposition of public art rest with the President.

PUBLIC ART

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RPAW will meet at least annually to assess acquisition, relocation, storage, deaccession, loan or other public-art related issues, with additional ad hoc meetings as needed. RPAW assumes no liability for the safety of public art installations.

History:

05.29.2008 Adopted

03.01.2025 Proposed; 11.10.2025 Revised

09.30.2026 Revised; Definition Edits

PUBLIC ART

PROCEDURES**Proposals for Acquiring Public Art**

All proposals for public art installations on campus shall be submitted to the RPAW Chair. Proposals must be in writing and include:

- a. Applicant/Artist contact information, including address, email, and phone number
- b. Artwork Information, including:
 1. Description of artwork(s), including visual images (where applicable)
 2. Explanation of how artwork(s) fits academic, cultural, and aesthetic qualities of the campus(es)
 3. Proposed location, date, type, and duration of installation
 4. Proposed date of installation
 5. Cost of the art proposed for installation
 6. Cost(s) associated with installation and maintenance
 7. Acquisition details of artwork(s) (i.e., donation, purchase, loan)
 8. Label details for installation:
 1. Artist biography
 2. Artist statement
 3. Artist resume/vitae
 4. Title, date, materials, etc. of artwork(s)

Any member of the college or external community may submit a proposal for public art. RPAW will review all public art proposals against established criteria (below) and gather input from the college community before making recommendations to the President for approval, suggestion for modification, or rejection. RPAW recognizes the President reserves final authority for decisions; however, when the President's decision goes against the work group's recommendation, the RPAW chair may request an appeal meeting with the President. This process will occur prior to new art pieces being purchased or accepted by the college.

Criteria and Procedures for Acceptance/Rejection of Public Art

Recognizing that selection and acceptance of public art can be controversial, subjective and technically difficult, RPAW will consider the following criteria in considering acquisitions of public art:

- Supports educational, cultural, and creative purpose of the college
- Expands the college's public art collection through breadth of memorable, thought-provoking, and/or enduring themes, subjects, mediums and styles
- Recognizes and fosters diverse social, cultural, and historical perspectives
- Enhances campus and community intellectual understanding of art
- Local, community, and regional impact
- Overall artistic quality, design, craftsmanship and artistic intent

PUBLIC ART

Before making a recommendation to the President, RPAW will:

- Ensure proposed public art is aligned with mission and purpose of the College
- Consult with the Facilities Department to identify where proposed public art may be safely installed (e.g., traffic flows, cleaning and maintenance, risk of theft or vandalism)
- Ensure installation, maintenance, and removal (where applicable) of proposed public art is feasible and complies with existing building codes, and safety requirements, etc.
- Consider costs associated with installation and maintenance
- Seek broad input from the college community
- For donated public art, ensure authenticity and donor's clear title

Process of Acquisition / AccessionAcquisition by Donation

When considering art donations, RPAW will work with the Foundation to ensure that:

- The art was not illegally exported
- The donor legally owns the art and can provide proper documentation
- The donation is free from any restrictions on conditions of use, display or future handling, unless approved by the President
- Gifts valued at \$5,000 or more are appraised by an independent appraiser, paid for by the donor
- There are no ongoing costs associated with the gift
- An [Artwork Donation/Loan Request Form](#) is completed and on file (required for every item of donated art)

Acquisition by Purchase

Ridgewater College may have funds set aside for the purchase and acquisition of artworks for its buildings or grounds. Submitting a Public Art Proposal is the first step in the process for purchasing art.

Acquisition by Loan

Artists may periodically offer or request their artwork be displayed at the college for a specified length of time. An [Artwork Donation/Loan Request Form](#) is required for every item of loaned art, and a Public Art Proposal must be submitted for each potential item of loaned art.

Maintaining an Inventory

Prior to installation or storage, acquired artworks will be assigned an accession number, catalogued, and entered into the public art collection inventory database. Entries will include the following information: Artist resume, statements, or articles if available; instructions for care and maintenance; donation or purchase agreements with artist or donor; provenance of the artwork; and appraisals.

PUBLIC ART

Ownership of Public Art

For donated art, ownership and acquisition terms will be determined by the Artwork Donation Agreement between the Foundation and donor. For purchased art, such terms will be determined by the purchasing policies of the college.

Relocation, Repair, Deaccession of Public Art

Proposals for relocation, repair or deaccession may originate from any member of the college community by submitting a request to the RPAW chair for consideration. Possible reasons to consider relocation of public art may include:

- **Safety:** If the current location poses a safety risk to students, staff, or visitors, such as obstructing walkways or being in a high-traffic area.
- **Visibility and Accessibility:** To enhance the visibility and accessibility of the artwork, ensuring that more people can appreciate it.
- **Environmental Factors:** If the current location exposes the artwork to harsh weather conditions or other environmental factors that could damage it.
- **Campus Development:** Planned construction or renovation projects that require the relocation of the artwork to accommodate new buildings or facilities.
- **Aesthetic Considerations:** To better integrate the artwork with the surrounding environment or to complement other nearby artworks or architectural features.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** If the artwork's current location is deemed culturally insensitive or inappropriate, relocating it to a more suitable location.
- **Functional Use of Space:** If the space currently occupied by the artwork is needed for other functional purposes, such as creating study areas, seating, or other campus amenities.
- **Community Feedback:** Based on feedback from the campus community, including students, faculty, and staff, who may suggest a more suitable location for the artwork.
- **Maintenance and Preservation:** To facilitate easier maintenance and preservation efforts, ensuring the artwork remains in good condition.

Relocation or deaccession requests for any art which is part of the Minnesota Percent for Arts collection must be handled according to the procedures required by the Minnesota Arts Board.

Deaccessioning is the formal process of permanently removing an object from the collection. Art cannot be deaccessioned based solely on content. RPAW may consider deaccessioning artwork(s) for the following reasons:

- Damage beyond repair; deterioration to an extent no longer representing the artist's original intent or work; damage/deterioration where cost of care outweighs the artwork value
- Safety risk
- Financial challenges to the College in order to appropriately maintain the piece over time.
- Theft or loss
- Installation site is altered or made inaccessible (for site-specific works)
- Artwork no longer aligns with the college's mission or program

PUBLIC ART

- 215 • Artwork would be better viewed and experienced in another location or setting, including outside of
216 campus buildings and grounds.
217 • Artwork lacks clear legal title of ownership or was accessioned/acquired due to a logistical or
218 processing error.

219 Disposal Following Deaccession

220 RPAW ensures disposal of public art be formally conducted and adequately documented. Artists whose
221 work is being considered for deaccession will be notified via artist contact information provided in
222 installation proposal process. For art works of substantial value, outside review and formal appraisals
223 should be obtained.

224 Disposal actions to be considered include all of the following:

- 225 • Return to artist or donor
226 • Exchange for artwork(s) of similar or higher value, greater alignment with college mission, etc.
227 • Sale through private sales or public auctions, with proceeds used to support collection's care or
228 acquisition of new art
229 • Donation to another suitable party able to provide public access for viewing
230 • Destruction or recycling of materials so as to ensure no remaining piece is recognizable as part of
231 the original artwork

232 A permanent record of the artwork's inclusion in the college's public art collection and reasons for its
233 deaccession or disposal will be maintained as a separate section in the public art collection database.

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236 *History:*
237 *05.29.2008 Adopted*
238 *03.21.2025 Proposed; 09.30.2026 Revised*
239 *09.30.2026; Formatting Edits*