



Library Display and Art Exhibit Policy

Purpose

The Meriden Public Library's Display and Art Exhibit Policy provides a basis for the display of Library materials by Library staff, informs the public about the principles and criteria upon which these decisions are made, and promotes the purposes of the Library's mission, which is: "To inspire life-long learning, create possibilities and strengthen our community through free access to resources, experiences, and opportunities for all." The Meriden Public Library is also pleased to offer individuals, groups, or organizations the opportunity to display their art work/exhibits. This policy is intended to encourage equitable access for artists in the Meriden area.

Policy

The Meriden Public Library recognizes the importance of displays as resources for voluntary inquiry and the dissemination of information and ideas and to promote free expression and free access to ideas by residents.

With a strong focus on encouraging the love of reading, lifelong learning, and creativity, we establish responsive connections between the diverse needs of our community, our vast collections, our digital services, and an array of engaging programming. A key aspect of our approach is the creation of thoughtfully curated displays, which play an essential role in informing and inspiring individuals of all ages and diverse backgrounds. These displays serve as a tangible expression of our dedication to the community and exemplify our belief that a vibrant Library contributes to a strong community. Displays are provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all residents, represent a wide range of varied and diverging viewpoints, and provide access to content that is relevant to the research, independent interests, and educational needs of residents.

Principles and Criteria

Responsibility for the selection of exhibits resides with the Library Director or their designee, but day-to-day responsibility is shared by Library employees throughout the Library who are professionally trained to curate and develop displays. The Library reserves the right to decline any display in accordance with the Library's best interests. The Library Director may reject a display that does not fit with the mission of the Library, or that is not neatly and attractively presented. Exhibits for commercial purposes are not allowed.

Library staff uses the following criteria in making decisions about display topics, materials, and accompanying resources:

- Community needs and interests
- Availability of display space
- Historical, cultural, artistic, or educational significance
- Connection to other community or national programs, exhibitions, or events
- Nourishment of intellectual, aesthetic and creative growth
- Relation to Library collections, resources, exhibits, and programs
- Encouragement of individuals to contribute to the appreciation of the arts

The Library will strive to include a wide spectrum of opinions and viewpoints in Library-initiated displays and exhibits, as well as offer displays and exhibits that appeal to a range of ages, interests, and information needs. Library-initiated displays and exhibits should not exclude topics, books, media, and other resources solely because they may be considered controversial. The Library does not accept responsibility for ensuring that all points of view are represented in any single display.

The Library provides displays created or curated by librarians or staff members of the public Library as well as allowing displays created by members of the public or community groups to be exhibited in the public Library. The Library may partner with other community agencies, organizations, educational institutions, or individuals to develop and present co-sponsored displays and exhibits.

Acceptance of a display or exhibit topic by the Library does not constitute an endorsement by the Meriden Public Library of the content of the display or exhibit, or of the views expressed in the materials on display. All Library materials are evaluated and made accessible in accordance with the protections against discrimination set forth in section 46a-64 of the general statutes.

All exhibits must meet existing State and Federal laws on obscenity, libel, defamation of character, and invasion of privacy. Exhibits may not promote or represent any activity or purpose that is in violation of local, state, or federal ordinances or laws, including copyright and public performance laws.

Applying for Exhibit Space

All potential exhibitors must complete an application to be submitted to the Library. This form is available at the Information Desk or online at www.meridenLibrary.org.

Artists must be 18 years of age or older to apply to exhibit their work.

Exhibits by the Meriden Public Library will be given first priority for display. The Library requests that all pieces proposed for exhibit be submitted for review. The preferred form of submittal is digital (.jpg or .png). The decision of the Library is final.

Exhibits are scheduled for one month by the Community Services Librarian. Individuals using the Library's exhibit spaces may not install their works prior to the dates on which their space reservations begin.

Exhibitors should recognize that the Library is a public building used by a large number of people. Neither the City of Meriden, nor the Meriden Public Library will be responsible for any damage or loss that may occur during setup and removal or during the time the exhibit is displayed.

Each artist is responsible for hanging their own work and taking down the same when the exhibit has ended. The artist must schedule the installation and removal date and time with the Community Services Librarian. Artists who fail to remove items on or before the specified date will not be allowed exhibit space in the future. Costs incurred by the Meriden Public Library for dismantling and/or storage of exhibits will be borne by the artist/exhibitor.

Exhibits must conform to the space restrictions of the exhibit areas provided.

The Library is in no way involved in the sale of any exhibit item. The Library may provide artist contact information. Artists may handle patron requests for sales directly.

All publicity concerning the exhibits must be approved by the Library. The artist may give a brief description of the exhibit to the Community Services Librarian if they would like mention of the exhibit made in the Library newsletter. A photo of the exhibit may be posted on the Library's web page.

Intellectual Freedom and Censorship

The choice of Library materials by patrons is an individual matter. The Library recognizes that some materials may be controversial or offensive to an individual but maintains that individuals can apply their values only to themselves. The selection of Library materials is predicated on the customer's right of access to information and freedom from censorship. Selections will not be made based on anticipated approval or disapproval, but on the merits of the material itself.

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Selection of materials will not be inhibited by the possibility that materials may inadvertently come into the possession of or be seen by minors. No one can exercise censorship to restrict access to Library materials by others. It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to determine which Library materials are appropriate for their children. The Meriden Public Library supports intellectual freedom and endorses the American Library Association (ALA) Freedom to Read Statement, Freedom to View Statement, the Library Bill of Rights and all relevant interpretations.

Procedures for the Questioning of Library Displays by Patrons

The Library limits consideration of requests to reconsider material, displays or programs to individuals that are residents of Meriden. Please see Material Review and Reconsideration Policy and reconsideration form for further information on this process.

Approved by the Meriden Library Board of Trustees, October 27, 2025.