

best practice paper:

**regulations
and best
practices
for organising
design
exhibitions**

ico-D. Leading creatively.

ico-D is the world body for professional design. It is a non-profit, non-partisan, member-based network of independent organisations and stakeholders working within the multidisciplinary scope of design and expanded media. Founded in 1963, ico-D actively promotes the value of design practice, thinking, education, research and policy, representing more than 140 organisations in 67 countries and regions globally.

ico-D's members believe in interdisciplinary collaboration and the effectiveness of a collective voice to represent the design industry.

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Contents

- 4 Introduction
- 6 Regulations
 - 1 Open entry exhibitions
 - 1.1 Selection committee
 - 1.2 Duties of the Selection committee
 - 7 1.3 Independent Moderator
 - 1.4 Time frame
 - 1.5 The brief
 - 8 1.6 Copyright and patents
 - 1.7 Identification of submissions
 - 1.8 Publication of results
 - 1.9 Protection and Return
 - 1.10 Report
- 9 Regulations
 - 2 Closed entry exhibitions
 - 2.1 Invitations
 - 2.2 Curator or Curatorial Committee
- 10 Best practices
 - 3.1 Selection Committee composition
 - 3.2 Reimbursement of Selection Committee members
 - 3.3 Return and Protection
- 11 Student exhibitions
 - Introduction
 - 4.1 Supervision by teaching staff
 - 4.2 Exhibition programs as part of school curriculum

Introduction

Professional design exhibitions differ from award competitions. Award competitions aim to evaluate and recognise existing work through assignment of awards and prizes, whereas design exhibitions may or may not include award schemes. If the exhibition offers awards, please refer to ico-D's **Regulations and best practices for organising design award competitions**.

The aim of an exhibition may be to offer an overview of production within the design sector, to illustrate and define current benchmarks, to highlight leading social, cultural and economic trends that may influence future design projects, or may be devoted to a specific subject chosen by a Curator or a Curatorial committee.

Likewise, an exhibition may be open or closed entry. In the first case, people are invited to enter submissions which are then reviewed by a Selection Committee in order to choose successful entrants. The success of the entries is relevant to the complexity and importance of the topic or theme, or selected on the basis of overall quality if the aim of the exhibition is to provide an overview of best works within a given scope. In the case of closed entries, the organiser invites specific designers whose work relates to a chosen subject or theme.

The ico-D Secretariat provides general advice to organisers on developing rules and guidelines and on appointing a Selection Committee if necessary. It provides substantial consultation for endorsed events, which is a free service to Members and offered on a fee basis to non-members.

This document includes regulations and best practices governing the organisation of design exhibitions. Rules are the instructions given to the participant.

Regulations are the conditions ico-D requires for endorsement. Best practices are non-binding advice that are recommended and should be applied where possible.

ico-D recommends that its Members not participate in nor act as Selection Committee members in design exhibitions that do not comply with this document.

Where an exhibition is endorsed by ico-D, this document must be circulated to the Selection Committee or Curator in advance of the competition.

Unintentional breach of these regulations and best practices by an ico-D-endorsed exhibition will result in a letter of warning. Any subsequent breach will result in the withdrawal of the endorsement.

Regulations

1 Open Entry Exhibitions

1.1 Selection Committee

The Selection Committee for design exhibitions must include at least three people.

The majority of the Selection Committee members must be professional designers. Selection Committee members who are not practising designers must have expertise relevant to the exhibition.

For an exhibition to be called “international”, the Selection Committee must include members from at least two of these seven regions of the world: North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Western Asia, Asia, Oceania.

For an exhibition to be called “regional”, the Selection Committee must include members from at least three countries of that region.

Where an exhibition is an annual event, no more than 45% of the Selection Committee members can serve on consecutive Selection Committees.

No Selection Committee member, organiser nor any member of their immediate family, firm nor design teams (designers who collaborate on a regular basis) may submit their works for the exhibition.

The names of the Selection Committee members must be published in the Call for Submissions and in the catalogue and other promotional materials relating to the exhibition.

1.2 Duties of the Selection Committee

The Selection Committee members will attend all official meetings of the panel, which can take place face-to-face, via telecommunication or in an online environment.

If the organisers of the exhibition have not nominated a chairperson, the Selection Committee will elect a chairperson from amongst themselves.

If the organisers of the exhibition have not stipulated a decision-making process, the Selection Committee will choose what to do.

The Selection Committee will examine all the designs submitted by the entrants, determine whether they meet the rules and the brief included in the Call for Submissions, and exclude those that do not.

Regulations

The Selection Committee chairperson will prepare a written report of the results.

1.3 Independent Moderator

An independent Moderator (“Moderator”) must be appointed by the organiser to act amongst the organiser, the Selection Committee and the entrants. The name of the Moderator must be announced at the same time as the Call for Submissions.

The Moderator is responsible for:

- receiving all submissions;
- receiving written questions within the time limit stated in the rules;
- passing the written questions received, without disclosing any names, to the Selection Committee or to a Selection Committee member appointed by the Selection Committee chairperson for answering questions;
- sending all the questions and the Selection Committee’s corresponding answers to all entrants, by a date mentioned in the rules;
- opening the submissions after the deadline of the competition;
- keeping a register of all submissions;
- passing the submissions to the Selection Committee;
- ensuring all submissions are returned (unless other arrangements have been agreed upon).

The Moderator may not act as a secretary to the Selection Committee, nor should the Moderator or the organiser take part in the Selection Committee’s work in any way.

1.4 Time frame

There must be a minimum of one month and no more than six months between the Call for Submissions and the closing date for submissions.

1.5 The brief

The rules shall clearly define and explain the objectives and the topic/theme of the exhibition. Full information shall be provided on all aspects of the exhibition.

Regulations

1.6 Copyright and patents

Organisers must comply with the clause on copyright and patents that appears in ico-D’s **International conditions of contract and engagement for designers**.

1.7 Identification of submissions

The names and address of the participant must be shown on all submissions.

1.8 Publication of results

All entrants should be advised of the names of works to be included in the exhibition within two months of the closing date of the Call for Submissions.

1.9 Protection and return

The organiser is responsible for the safety of all submissions received. Organisers must include in their regulations a statement regarding whether submissions will be returned, and the terms and conditions regarding who pays for the return and when it will happen.

1.10 Report

When an exhibition is endorsed by ico-D, the organiser will provide a full report to ico-D once the exhibition has been completed.

This report must include the number of entrants, the names of the Selection Committee, the names of the designers selected for exhibitions, and comments by the Selection Committee on the quality of the work submitted.

Regulations

2 Closed Entry Exhibition

2.1 Invitation

A closed entry exhibition does not need to have a Selection Committee, but instead designers are invited to the exhibition by a Curator or a Curatorial Committee according to their work's relevance to the chosen subject or theme.

The Curator or a Curatorial Committee is allowed to disregard any work sent by the invited designer if they find it irrelevant to the theme, or if any additional work is sent by the designer outside of the specific works requested.

2.2 Curator or Curatorial Committee

The Curator need not be professional designer, but they must have expertise relevant to the exhibition. If there is a Curatorial Committee, at least one member of that team should be a practising designer. The Curatorial Committee members who are not practising designers must have expertise relevant to the exhibition.

No Curator, Curatorial Committee member, organiser nor any member of their immediate family, firm, or design teams (designers who collaborate on a regular basis) may take part in the exhibition.

The names of the Curator or a Curatorial Committee members must be published in the catalogue and other printed materials relating to the exhibition.

All regulations applying to the Open Entry Exhibitions regarding Copyright and patents and Protection and return apply also to the Closed Entry Exhibitions.

For an exhibition to be called “international”, the designers invited to participate must be from at least two of these seven regions of the world: North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Western Asia, Asia, Oceania.

For an exhibition to be called “regional”, the designers invited to participate must be from at least three countries of that region.

Best practices

3.1 Selection Committee composition

Gender should be a consideration when constructing such a committee.

3.2 Reimbursement of the Selection Committee

Where the organiser requests the Selection Committee travel to meet face-to-face or to participate in the promotion of the exhibition, the organiser should pay the Selection Committee’s travel, offer accommodation and per diems.

3.3 Protection and return

If the organiser fails to include a statement regarding whether submissions will be returned, and the terms and conditions regarding who pays for that and when it will happen, it should fulfill all requests for return of work received within two months of the exhibition selection at the organiser’s cost, and to fulfil those requests within two months of the exhibition selection.

Student exhibitions

Introduction

All regulations for design exhibitions also apply to student design exhibitions.

4.1 Supervision by teaching staff

The extent to which the teaching staff may assist or participate in submissions must be clearly stated in the rules. If collaborative or group submissions are allowed, then this must be clearly stated.

4.2 Exhibition programs as part of school curriculum

Organisers may arrange so that an exhibition conforms to and becomes part of the education institution's curriculum. We recommend that schools consider students to have complied with curriculum requirements if they complete the creative brief. Students have the option to submit or not submit the work to the exhibition.

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