MuSeUm
CoLab Studio

Tips for a strong submission for MSU Museum CoLab Studio exhibitions

Just because you're not an artist or a seasoned museum exhibitor doesn't mean you can't submit something for a CoLab Studio exhibition!

Who can apply?

Individuals, teams, and/or large collaborations. The individual or team project representative must be age 18 or older. There are no restrictions on education level, research background, country, citizenship status, etc. You do not need to be affiliated with Michigan State University at all.

Do I have to have everything done before submitting my project?

No! We have some capacity to mentor and shepherd projects to completion. Please reach out to the CoLab Studio Creative Director, Mark Sullivan (sullivan@msu.edu).

Is it ok if my project was *not* created specifically for this exhibition?

Yes! There is no curatorial bias for or against finished projects that have been exhibited elsewhere. If it fits the themes and will resonate with our audience, submit it!

How many projects will be selected?

We're thinking anywhere from 10 to 15. Space for each exhibit will be allocated by the design team once we've selected the projects.

What exhibit formats are accepted?

Almost anything. We've had digital, physical, immersive, game-based, video, audio, interactive, sculptural, web-based, in situ experimental, and data-intensive exhibits. If it offers a unique visitor experience, we're all ears. But you should know that we don't do tons of wall text (our CoLaborator team will be around to help engage visitors with your work!).

What is your target audience?

The MSU Museum CoLab Studio exhibitions are aimed at young adults (ages 18-25). MSU students are part of the curatorial process, exhibition production, and visitor experience in the gallery. One of the primary evaluation criteria for curatorial selection is how young adults will connect with your work.

What kinds of program and event ideas should we submit?

We produce a wide variety of talks, discussions, performances, and interactive workshops for the programming series that accompanies an exhibition. It doesn't have to be a one-off event: an outreach program miniseries, classroom tie-in, or citizen science project could be awesome! Note that we are not able to provide a $3,000 budget for every program. Programs that are costlier to produce often need co-sponsorship from other organizations and departments at MSU. Please reach out to the CoLab Studio Program Manager, Abbie Stevens (alstev@msu.edu), if you would like help solidifying your program ideas.

I'm a researcher who hasn't done this before. What challenges should I anticipate?

Plan to eliminate jargon to make your material accessible to a young adult audience. You'll need to explain your research simply without twisting or misinterpreting it, balance the scientific and artistic content, and format visualizations for innovative displays.

I'm a scientist or engineer. Why should I want to participate?

We think it's awesome, but we're a little biased. Previous exhibitors have said:

- The themes of the exhibition tie in well with your research, and you want to relate your work to pressing global issues on a public platform.
- You're looking for more ways to do outreach and highlight your research in an interesting and satisfying way.
- The visualizations produced by your research are beautiful and could make a cool immersive art experience.
- Your team wants to use the exhibit as a platform for advocacy.

I'm an artist or designer. Do I need to collaborate with a researcher or connect to science?

It's not necessary, but we do love interdisciplinary projects! We have some capacity to connect artists with researchers in our network, so please reach out to the CoLab Studio Creative Director, Mark Sullivan (sullivan@msu.edu), if you'd like help finding a collaborative partner.