

# TEMPORARY PUBLIC INSTALLATIONS

Sometimes, the best way to get work out into the public is to put it up temporarily. This guide helps you think through installing temporary work in public in a variety of formats.

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND INTENTION

*Public installations are in public. Before you pick a site, develop a piece, or pitch a proposal think about these questions:*

- Do you have an existing partner or site you are working with? Who are the stakeholders? Who are the neighbors? To what extent do you need a partner in order to enter a community?
- Do you have a particular audience that you would like to reach with your installation? Where is that audience? How do they engage?
- How is your installation meant to be viewed? What impact is it meant to have on the people who interact with it?
- To what degree is your installation appropriate to the context, function, and aesthetic of the community or space? Valuable work can be challenging to its surroundings, but this may require additional buy-in or effort. Consider to what extent your installation is welcomed and wanted by the surrounding community, and to what extent it fits the surroundings?

### TELL US FIRST!

If you're considering any kind of installation of any duration off-campus, you must let us know in advance. Contact the Office or your director. We're here to help and support!

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

*Whether your piece is site-specific or not, the location of temporary installations can make or break an installation.*

- Scope out ideal sites in advance. Think about your audience, access to the site, transportation, security, and space. Understand if you need an interior or exterior space.
- Identify who controls the sites that you're interested in. You may need to utilize property ownership look-up.
- If you have an existing partner you're working with, you may want to start with a conversation about their needs, and if you could utilize their space for your installation.
- Before approaching the owner of a potential site, it can be helpful to have a clear proposal and set of constraints. Make these constraints and ideals as tangible as possible. Be prepared to address things like:
  - How long will the installation process take? How long will it be up for?
  - How much space do you need?
  - Do you need storage? For how long?
  - What are the security requirements?
  - What access do you need to the space?
  - What materials are you planning to use?
  - What funding will you utilize?
  - How will the work be secured?
  - Do you want the work back afterwards?

## AGREEMENTS AND APPROVALS

*Once you've identified a site and a partner, ensure that you've outlined your relationship in writing, and that you understand the process for approvals.*

- You may need a written agreement with your site or partner. Some sites will have existing documents for space usage, or you may need to utilize a Project Agreement. *All agreements must be reviewed. Contact the Office for Socially Engaged Practice ([samfox-engage@email.wustl.edu](mailto:samfox-engage@email.wustl.edu)) for more information. Some projects may need to be reviewed by General Counsel.*
- This agreement should outline who is responsible for what, timeline with checkpoints and milestones, approvals needed, and contact people.
- With your site or partner, determine who needs to be involved in a process of approvals. Are there staff responsible for safety or maintenance? Are there neighbors who need to be informed? Is there a director who wants final say? Determine the appropriate stakeholders and the timeline for seeking their approvals *before you begin fabrication.*
- Be clear what kind of feedback you're asking for at various points of the process. It can help to stipulate when final decisions need to be made such as size, materials, timeline, and budget.
- Follow through on your agreed-upon approvals process to avoid roadblocks.

## PLAN FOR DE-INSTALLATION

*Thinking about the end before you've even begun can be a struggle, but planning for de-installation from the beginning will prevent conflict further down the line.*

- Identify who will do the de-installation. If it is students, will this happen during the semester? Who will check to ensure the de-installation has been completed? What tools will be utilized?
- After students have graduated and the semester has ended, they are no longer covered under University insurance policies and do not have access to tools or resources. Plan accordingly.
- Choose materials and installation techniques that support de-installation. We recommend testing applications and fasteners in advance of installation to ensure they will not cause damage.
- Complete a final walk-through with your site or partner to ensure the site has been returned to the expected standard. Plan for this walk-through in your timeline.
- Contact the Office for Socially Engaged Practice ([samfox-engage@email.wustl.edu](mailto:samfox-engage@email.wustl.edu)) for a de-installation consultation.

### STAMPS AND SEALS

Some installations will need to be approved by a Missouri-licensed architect or engineer. You must discuss these with the Office for Socially Engaged Practice before beginning.

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## SAFETY FIRST

*When work is installed in public, safety is essential. Consider these aspects for your installation.*

### Fire

- Do you need to fireproof your piece?
- Do you need a fire inspection?
- How can you limit fire risk?

### Emissions

- Are you using materials that produce emissions, such as spray paint, indoors?
- Will you be working with adhesives or materials that produce emissions?
- What protective gear or measures should you take to prevent harmful exposure to yourself and others?

### Installation Process

- Will students be completing the installation?
- Are they utilizing tools that they have been trained and authorized to use?
- Will they be on ladders or lifts? Who will be operating the lifts?
- What protective gear or measures should you take to prevent harmful exposure to yourself and others?

### Climbing, Pulling, or Falling

- Is it possible for people to climb or pull on the installation? What would happen?
- How will the installation be attached?

Find more resources at [sites.wustl.edu/insidesfs/engagement/](https://sites.wustl.edu/insidesfs/engagement/)

### Maintenance

- Who is responsible for maintenance and cleaning? How will this be completed?

### Breaking

- How might the installation break? How can you prevent this?
- What kinds of repairs might be needed? Who is responsible for repairs?
- What supplies do you need to make repairs?
- What damage might result in the installation being removed?

### Wind and Weather

- Is the installation exposed to the elements?
- Is there a risk of wind damage?
- Have you tested the materials for solar or weather exposure?

### Content and Materials

- Could the content of the work be threatening or traumatizing to some members of the public?
- Could the materials be threatening or hazardous to health or safety?
- Could materials from the piece be used to cause damage to people or property?

*Consult with Sam Fox School Facilities or University Environmental Health and Safety regarding possible safety considerations related to your project.*

## ASK PERMISSION

*It can be tempting to go guerrilla with your installations. There can be instances where this has conceptual value but real, permanent, and damaging consequences.*

- Consider who will be accountable for the space and your installation. Who will have to answer questions or complaints?
- Who might be negatively impacted by your actions?
- Are you engaging in an activity that is potentially illegal? Temporary installations without explicit permission on public or private property can be illegal and considered trespassing, vandalism, graffiti, etc. Even if it is property you own or occupy, inquire about any regulations.
- Will it damage your relationships or reputation, or the relationships and reputation of others? Might it damage the reputation of the University or the relationships of other individuals with community partners?
- If you are asked to stop, always stop. Do not endanger yourself or others.

### ON-CAMPUS INSTALLATIONS

If you plan to install on-campus, follow the [Campus Installation Procedures](#). At least three weeks prior to your planned installation date, you must submit an [Installation Permission form](#). For more information about installations in the Sam Fox School complex, contact Sam Fox School Facilities Manager Leland Orvis, [orvis@wustl.edu](mailto:orvis@wustl.edu).

## SIGNAGE AND COMMUNICATION

*Sometimes the mystery of a temporary installation can be exciting, but planning for signage and interpretive explanations can help your audience understand what you've done.*

- Include funding for signage in your budget. Ensure that signs will survive the elements and any damage, and will be legible to the audience.
- Consult with Sam Fox School Communications and your partner for appropriate credit and logos. Thank the people who supported your project.
- If you need to install another fixture in order to display your signage, ensure that you seek permission from your site.

## CONTEXT IS SUBJECTIVE

Individuals and groups may experience your work differently than intended. Be mindful of the myriad ways your work—and your presence in a community—could be interpreted and experienced.

If you are working in a group, don't assume that what is acceptable for one person is acceptable for all. Communities may be welcoming to some people and hostile to others for reasons that may not be reasonable, rational, or fair. Do not put members of your group at risk.

Be thoughtful, especially when pushing boundaries.