

Request for Qualifications (RFQ): Socially Engaged Art

Introduction

Mesa Arts Center, owned and operated by the City of Mesa, is a unique, architecturally stunning, and award-winning facility located in the heart of downtown Mesa. Arizona's largest arts center is home to four theaters, five art galleries, and 14 art studios. Guests, patrons, and students come to Mesa Arts Center to enjoy live entertainment and performances, world-class visual art exhibitions, outstanding arts education classes, and compelling events and festivals. Mesa Arts Center's vision is an arts ignited and inspired community, our mission is to create meaningful arts experiences in Mesa for everyone.

MABEL, a program of Mesa Arts Center, is an adaptable, 12-foot modular trailer that takes community engagement on the road as a flexible creative space and pop-up arts center. Free and accessible hands-on artistic experiences with MABEL are meant to create connections on the spot, prompt discussion, catalyze change and spark creativity. MABEL provides free, accessible programming by request to existing events ie community events, parks, schools, farmer's markets and more, with a developing focus on under-served neighborhoods, meeting residents where they are. This work is fundamental to our larger mission.

RFQ: Art/Design Services

Mesa Arts Center's Mobile Art-Based Engagement Lab, *MABEL*, seeks an artist or artist team with a strong commitment to community and socially engaged art practice. We invite qualified artists to submit qualifications for work related to MABEL the Mobile Art Based Engagement Lab's residencies 2025-2026.

Socially Engaged Art (SEA) Defined

Social practice, or socially engaged practice focuses on community engagement through a range of art media, human interaction or social discourse can include a visual, audio or otherwise artistic product or present the work as purely relational.

Scope of Work

The selected artist will work closely with our organization to create engaging and interactive artistic projects that reflect the City of Mesa and Mesa Arts Center's mission and values and attract people to engage at events MABEL is attending throughout the city. Compensation is budgeted at \$3,000 per residency series with 3 public engagements total.

The scope of work includes the following:

- Development of a project, including title and description, which engages residents and highlights *MABEL*'s core pillars to: Create Connections, Spark Creativity, Catalyze Change, and Prompt Discussion.

- Project must be easily transported/popped-up at 3 community events with use of our Engagement Lab for transportation as space allows.
- Consistent set-up and facilitation at these 3 events as the face of the activity working closely with community members.
 - Events will be supported by Mesa Arts Center Staff and Volunteers
- Project description, artist bio and images will be shared with the public before and following events by the Art's Center as applicable.

Qualifications

The ideal artist or artist team should possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in working with diverse communities.
- A diverse portfolio showcasing work that resonates with a variety of communities.
- Knowledge of socially-engaged art and best practices.
- Strong communication skills and ability to collaborate effectively with our team.
- Creative and innovative design sensibilities.
- Strong attention to detail.
- Commitment to managing deadlines.

Proposal Submission

Interested artists or graphic designers should submit the following:

1. An artist statement including your thoughts on art's place in community practice.
2. A cover letter expressing your interest in working with Mesa Arts Center's Mobile Art Based Engagement Lab and serving the communities who attend MABEL events.
3. A selected portfolio showcasing relevant design projects and examples of work intended to engage different communities.
4. A proposed timeline referring to your availability, please factor in 2 weeks for review and briefing and the 1 month drafting period allotted upon selection.
5. Your contact information, including phone number, email, and website address if any.

Applications should be attached in a single pdf with subject line of email reading "Socially Engaged Art 2025 – [Your Name]" sent to mabel@mesaartscenter.com.

Submission Deadline

Sunday, June 8th, 2025 at 11:59 PM MST

Selection Process

Our staff will review all submissions and select the most qualified candidates based on experience, portfolio quality, and alignment with our mission and values.

We look forward to receiving your qualifications and partnering local artists that share the City of Mesa and Mesa Arts Center's commitment to creating and providing compelling and engaging arts experiences.

Questions

Contact:

mabel@mesaartscenter.com