

**Graduate Student Thesis Exhibition
Submission Guidelines & Process** (updated Fall 2025)

WHY McINTOSH?

McIntosh welcomes proposals for thesis exhibitions from MFA and PhD candidates enrolled in the Department of Visual Art, Studio and Museums and Curatorial Studies programs at Western University. The McIntosh holds one, four-week exhibition slot in June every year.

Exhibiting at the McIntosh, and working with professional curators, preparators, and other gallery staff will provide the graduating student with an exceptional experiential learning opportunity, gaining first-hand knowledge working with a professional public art gallery towards mounting an exhibition. Exhibiting at McIntosh will ensure a collaboration that is respectful and mutually beneficial, while meeting both the student's thesis requirements as well as professional gallery standards.

Throughout the process students will have the opportunity to:

- Engage in monthly meetings and/or studio visits with a professional gallery curator, and other members of the professional gallery team when relevant, for a minimum period of six months leading up to their exhibition. During this time, discussions will include how a curated exhibition that considers design, ancillary programming, didactics, labels, and other curatorial and institutional considerations contributes to a successful exhibition, one that effectively communicates the intent of the artist's work and/or curatorial intention to the public.
- Work closely with the Gallery Operations Specialist in the design, coordination, and logistics of installation, considering everything from health and safety to installation strategies, challenges, costs, shipping, and timelines.
- Work closely with professional Marketing and Communications staff to develop an effective, exhibition specific marketing campaign.

PROCESS

- Students must make their application to the Visual Arts Graduate Chair by the department deadline **March 31**.
- Once approved by the Graduate Chair, the student develops and submits an exhibition proposal to the McIntosh Curator Helen Gregory **no later than April 30**, the year prior to the exhibition.
- Students are encouraged to meet with the Curator to discuss their exhibition prior to starting/completing their application to address any potential obstacles and identify opportunities.
- Once received, Curatorial staff will review the proposal and schedule a studio visit or meeting with the student to discuss the proposal in more detail, to view the work, discuss curatorial thesis/intention, and to ensure all parties are clear about expectations.
- The student will be notified of the gallery's decision by **May 31**.

Please NOTE:

- Approval by the Visual Art Graduate Chair does not guarantee that your proposal will be approved by the McIntosh.
- If borrowing work or other items from other professional and/or public institutions, the curator will facilitate that process.
- McIntosh provides in-kind support including installation support (student is expected to be on-site to help install and de-install), marketing, curatorial mentoring, and an opening or closing reception.
- McIntosh does not provide financial support, pay artist fees, shipping fees, or cover any other costs. The student must confirm they have the funds secured to cover any exhibition costs prior to approval by the gallery.

The McIntosh may not approve a proposal for any reason including but not limited to:

- Inclusion of live animals, plants, hazardous or toxic materials
- Proposal is beyond the capacity and/or resources of the gallery or the student to mount effectively
- Exhibition could potentially damage the reputation of McIntosh Gallery, Western University, the exhibiting artist(s), other content providers or partners/collaborators
- Cultural, social, racial or any other insensitivity identified by the Gallery.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

DEADLINE: The completed submission must be received by Helen Gregory, Curator (hgregory@uwo.ca) no later than **April 30 the year prior to the exhibition**. It is strongly recommended that if you are planning to submit a proposal, that you set up a preliminary meeting/discussion with Helen prior to completing your submission.

Please include the following in your proposal:

1. Exhibition Proposal (500 words max)
 - a. Big Idea/Key concept (Elevator pitch 2-3 sentences)
 - b. Type of exhibition (2D, paintings, drawings, photography, installation, sound, digital, 3D, mixed, performance, etc.)
 - c. Location (east, west, both galleries), amount of space required (running and/or square ft.) Gallery floor plan will be provided upon request.
 - d. Exhibition Thesis statement
 - e. If relevant and/or anticipated, proposal must include the following:
 - i. Special installation requirements (equipment, technology, other resources)
 - ii. Ancillary programming ideas or intentions
 - iii. Publication, brochure and/or hand-out ideas or intentions

- iv. Inclusion of artwork or visual culture other than your own i.e. intention to borrow from other artists, galleries, institutions.
2. Artist or Curatorial philosophy (max 150 words, if not evident in the exhibition proposal).
3. Images
 - a. 5 - 10 images of work that communicates the nature, style, and quality of work or curatorial intent. It is understood that work and ideas for the exhibition is still in development and that work included in the images submitted may not be included in the final exhibition.
 - b. Include: Title, year, medium, dimensions, owner (if not the students work), location of work.
4. Budget

A one-page budget detailing expenses and funding sources (income sources must state whether they are confirmed or pending). Proposals for Curatorial Stream projects must demonstrate that the student has secured adequate funding to cover shipping and artists' fees. Please note: Students are not eligible to receive CARFAC Artist or Curatorial fees for work that fulfills degree program requirements, nor are they eligible for OAC Exhibition Assistance funding.

TIMELINE

The gallery will work with the student to finalize the timeline as part of the approval process. The anticipated/general timeline is as follows:

Item	Timeline Out	Who
Submit proposal to VA Grad Chair	March 31, year prior	Student
Preliminary meeting w McIntosh Curator	April, year prior	Student
Submission Deadline - McIntosh	April 30, year prior	Student
Notification of gallery's decision	May 31, year prior	Gallery
Studio Visit – screening process	August, year prior	Curator/Student
Decision / Agreement Reviewed & Signed	August, year prior	Curator/ Student
Monthly Studio Visits	Oct – July (monthly)	Curator/Student
Installation Production Meeting	February (5 mths out)	Preparator/Curator/Student
Tech and equipment display requirements	February (5 mths out)	Preparator; Curator; Student
Layout Design	March (4 months out)	Curator/Prep/Student
Ancillary Program Meeting	March (4 months out)	Curator; Student
Marketing & Communication Meeting	April (3 months out)	Gallery Operations/Student
Hi Res Images to Marketing	April (3 months out)	Student

Copy – Didactics, Labels, Akimbo, etc.	May (2 months out)	Student / Gallery Operations
Invitations; Website; Social Media		Marketing
Installation	2 – 3 weeks prior to opening	Student/Preparator
Opening	TBD	Student / Gallery staff
De-installation	Day after closing	Student/Preparator