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## Extending the agriculture “classroom” to lobbies and hallways through visual art

### Introduction

Visual material displayed in college building lobbies, hallways, and student lounges are a crucial part of “schoolscapes” (Brown, 2012) which serve multiple purposes. It can serve navigational purposes to provide directions and safety regulatory information to students (Siyانبola et al., 2023; Szabó, 2016). Additionally, they hold great pedagogical value with a potential to serve as an extension of traditional classrooms (Gorter, 2018). Art About Agriculture (AAA), established in 1983, uses agriculture and natural resources-themed visual arts to promote informal agricultural literacy (AAA, n.d). Using a free artwork loan initiative from the program’s permanent collection curated from Pacific Northwest’s artists’ response to an annual call for agriculture-themed art. Submitted art pieces are accompanied by artists’ statements for possible inclusion in a juror-selected traveling exhibition. The traveling exhibitions feature artwork sales, and afterwards selected art pieces are purchased for inclusion in the program’s permanent collection. In spite of the long existence of the artwork loan program, its reach has not been determined. This poster maps the reach (on campus and off campus) of the art loan initiative.

### Steps/How it works

The artwork loan program receives requests from interested organizations (college building managers, administrative offices, extension offices, foodbanks, institutes). The request is granted based on the condition that the artwork will be displayed in an open, publicly accessible space. The loan documents, detailing the name of artwork, artist, duration of loan, are signed by the loaning entity. Artwork is then shipped or picked up. Upon request, professional artwork installation services can be provided. The loan duration ranges from short-term (years) to long-term (indefinitely), and it is free.

### Results to date

Data were collected on artworks loaned between 2019 and 2025. These artworks are expected to be out on loan until 2027 or later. A total of 278 art pieces on loan in 26 locations across Oregon State University campus and off campus. Table 1 shows a breakdown of the 213 art pieces which have been loaned and displayed in 18 locations on campus for a duration of one to seven years. The top two campus locations with the most artwork, display 36.6% and 21.6% respectively.

**Table 1: Showing on campus artwork loan locations, loaned artworks, and loan duration**

On campus loan locations	Artworks (F)	Artworks (%)	Loan duration
Austin Hall	7	3.29	1
Ag Life Sci Building	5	2.35	2
Magruder Hall	3	1.41	2
Strand Hall	78	36.62	2-7
OSU Greenhouses	3	1.41	2
Crop sciences Building	7	3.29	2
Kerr Admin Building	46	21.60	2-4
Cascade Hall	3	1.41	2
Life Sci Building	6	2.82	2
Bates Hall	6	2.82	2

Waldo Hall	2	0.94	7
University Plaza	4	1.88	2
Rogers Hall	2	0.94	7
Withycombe Hall	12	5.63	2
Ballard Hall	5	2.35	2-4
Snell Hall	1	0.47	4
Heckart Lodge	3	1.41	2
Nash Hall	20	9.39	2023- indef
<b>Total</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>100</b>	

Off campus, there are eight loan locations, displaying 65 art pieces for a duration of two to four years, as seen in Table 2. Over 20% of the artwork is located in a research and extension center.

**Table 2: Showing off campus artwork loan locations, loaned artworks, and loan duration**

On campus loan locations	Artworks (F)	Artworks (%)	Duration
OSU Portland center	9	13.85	3
North Willamette Research & Ext Center	5	7.69	2
Klamath Basin Research and Extension Center	5	7.69	2
Wheat Marketing Center	6	9.23	2
Food Innovation Center	12	18.46	2
Chemeketa Community College	7	10.77	4
Columbia Gorge Food Bank	7	10.77	2
Southern OR Research and Extension Center	14	21.54	2019-indef
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>	

### **Future plans/advice to others**

We plan to expand our definition of art to include other artforms beyond visual arts and feature more diverse artists. We recommend that loan terms contain the display of artist statements alongside artworks. This is because those statements provide context and support the idea of the artworks serving as “extended” learning tools. We have recorded hesitancy from our art-lending entities to do this. Although the reach of this artwork loan program does not imply successful agricultural literacy, visual displays in shared spaces send messages (Fitzgerald et al., 2023) and what is displayed could provide extended learning opportunities (Gorter, 2018). Art, being a universal language, can contribute to informal public agricultural literacy and inspire appreciation for agriculture and natural resources (AAA, 2012). Our advice to those responsible for shared spaces is to take advantage of them as potential classroom extensions.

### **Costs/resources needed**

This loan program is jointly funded by endowments and the Dean’s office. We suggest collaborating with the Fine Arts program to determine a campus-specific budgeting structure. We found that formally expanding our open call to students since 2024 led to more research-grounded art acquisitions. Initially, student artists received a flat-rate small scholarship towards art supplies, which cost relatively less per art acquisition. However, given the quality of their work, the 2026 student rates are now up to par with other artists.

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