

Austin Children's Museum
Dell Discovery Center
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July 25, 2007

Request for Proposals

From January 19 – September 21 2008, Austin Children's Museum (ACM) will feature *Play It By Ear*, a 1,000 square foot interactive exhibit for young children and families produced by the Bay Area Children's Museum. The exhibit consists primarily of 8 "sound art" sculptures by Bay Area artists. A brief description is attached.

Consistent with its recently revised mission to "equip and inspire the next generation of creative problem solvers", ACM added to the *Play It By Ear* exhibit title the tag line *The Art and Science of Tinkering with Sound*. To deepen the science content of the exhibit, in-house staff will develop several additional interactive components focused on how sound is produced, what makes music and how we hear. To highlight local creative problem solving talents, ACM seeks to commission inventive interactive works relating to sound or music from Austin area artists/tinkerers. A total of \$10,000 will be awarded for 2-4 winning proposals of either 1) new works that will become part of the museum's exhibit collection or 2) existing work to be installed at the museum during the exhibit venue. Winning submissions will propose safe, durable, attractive works that complement the core *Play It By Ear* exhibit components and offer minds on/hands on engagement to educate and delight up to 160,000 children ages 2-12 and families, including school groups. Design parameters and proposal format are attached.

Proposal deadline: Friday August 17, 2007

Award notification: By August 31, 2007

Submit proposals to:

Erich Rose, Exhibit Manager
201 Colorado Street
Austin, Texas 78701



DESIGN PARAMETERS

- Fits within a footprint of 100 square feet (i.e. 10' x 10')
- Artist to transport and install the work at the museum the week of January 14-18, 2008 and remove it, if applicable, between September 15 and 17, 2008

General Guidelines

Family friendly design

- Both children and adults can use the exhibit easily.
- Exhibit format encourages interaction among several visitors, especially children and adults, but always provides an experience for a single person.
- Visitor experience is open-ended, i.e. there are multiple outcomes, as much freedom to experiment as possible and interactive modes that allow new experiences with multiple visits. Avoid "push same button, get same result" design.
- Visual design guides visitors to its use automatically – interaction is intuitive, does not require written or verbal instructions.
- Mechanisms can be easily manipulated, are visually pleasing and applicable to experience in daily life.
- Mechanical parts are exposed to view, if possible.
- If exhibit is alterable by viewer, it resets itself for the next visitor.
- Is accessible to visitors with a variety of physical and learning abilities and styles – multi-sensory.

Safety, durability and ease of maintenance

- Safe for unsupervised use by children as young as 2 years – i.e. no loose parts that pose choking hazard, no sharp corners. *ACM reserves the right to determine the safety and appropriateness of the proposed and finished work.*
- Exhibit is accessible for people with wheelchairs or walking aids
- Easily wiped clean and minor repairs can be accomplished by museum staff

PROPOSAL FORMAT

- Brief written description of the proposed work that clearly states how visitors will interact with it. What will they do? What will they learn? How will it spark their curiosity about sound, music, musical instruments, hearing, auditory perception, etc?
- Schematic drawings or photos of the proposed or similar work
- General specifications: dimensions, electrical requirements, sound characteristics, sound attenuation, ceiling height, and any special considerations like ambient light
- Personal resume and at least 2 references
- Statement about willingness/interest/availability to demonstrate to children and the general public the science and creative process behind your interactive work during exhibit opening events and at other times during the exhibit venue