



NATIONAL

LOON CENTER

National Loon Center - Call For Artists - Guidelines & Copyright

In January 2026, the National Loon Center in Crosslake, Minnesota, invites artists to submit proposals for a site-specific art installation in the entry vestibule of its upcoming state-of-the-art facility, scheduled to open in early 2027. This installation should reflect the Center's mission to protect loon habitats and freshwater ecosystems, providing an immersive experience that educates and inspires visitors about the importance of loons and lake conservation. The chosen artist will receive a maximum budget of \$250,000, and their work will become a permanent feature, welcoming guests into a space dedicated to conservation, education, and community involvement.

When

See projected schedule below (subject to change).

- January 26, 2026 – Artist Design Submission Begins
- March 16, 2026 – Artist Design Submission Ends
- March 31, 2026 – Notification of Selected Artist
- May 1, 2026 – Refined Design Intent Documentation and Power Requirements Due
- May 15, 2026 – Feedback from National Loon Center + Architectural Coordination
- June 30, 2026 – Schematic Design Drawings Due
- July 17, 2026 – Design Development Drawings Due
- Final installation timeline will be coordinated.

Who

The National Loon Center (NLC) is a new destination focused on conserving loons and freshwater ecosystems. Expected to open in early 2027, the Center aims to engage, educate, inspire, and motivate visitors to better coexist with loons in our shared habitat, the northern lakes. Through interactive exhibits, outdoor activities, and citizen science programs, the Center encourages a deeper understanding of loon ecology and the importance of protecting freshwater habitats. Its sustainable design and community-driven initiatives demonstrate a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and education.

Eligibility

This Call for Artists is open to professional artists, artist teams, and studios with demonstrated experience in the design, fabrication, and installation of permanent or large-scale works of art.

- Artists may apply as individuals or collaborative teams.
- Artists may reside anywhere within the United States.
- Employees, officers, board members of the National Loon Center, and their immediate family members are not eligible to apply.
- Prior experience with public art or architecturally integrated installations is strongly encouraged.

Selection Process

- Artists may submit up to two designs for consideration; however, only one design may be selected.
- Once the application has been submitted, it will be reviewed by a jury panel comprised of representatives selected by NLC. The panel will ensure that designs meet the Artist Agreement, Guidelines, and selection criteria provided. If your design is not chosen by the panel, you will be notified.
- After approval by the NLC Jury Installation panel, the chosen artist will be notified that they have been selected.
- Once the design is chosen, the Artist will enter into an Agreement with NLC for the design, fabrication, and installation.
- Based on the agreement between the Artist and NLC, NLC will have exclusive ownership of the artwork created, while the Artist will retain ownership of the copyright. The Artist will also grant NLC an exclusive copyright license for the artwork.

Selection Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- Artistic merit and innovative thinking.
- Suitability of work for a public or community setting.
- Artists must be able to coordinate drawings and self-perform installation.
- Expressed interest in and understanding of the project.
- The proposal's compliance with the goals and conditions of the project.
- Artist has agreed to, signed, and returned the Artist Copyright Agreement.
- To the extent anyone else contributes to your design, they must provide a written agreement assigning their copyright in the contribution to the National Loon Center.

Submission Requirements

Artists must submit a complete proposal by the stated deadline. Incomplete submissions may not be reviewed.

Each submission must include:

1. Concept Narrative
 - Written description of the proposed artwork, including concept, materials, scale, and visitor experience
 - Maximum 1,000 words
2. Visual Materials
 - Concept sketches, renderings, or visual references sufficient to convey the proposed design
 - Images may be preliminary, but should clearly illustrate intent
3. Technical Summary
 - Preliminary dimensions and estimated installed weight
 - Description of suspension or mounting approach
 - Identification of any integrated lighting or power needs
4. Budget Confirmation
 - Written acknowledgment that the artist can deliver the project within the total budget of \$250,000, inclusive of all costs
5. Artist Certification & Signature
6. Artist Qualifications
 - Resume or CV (maximum 3 pages per artist)
 - Up to 10 examples of relevant past work with brief descriptions

Submission may be emailed in PDF format to David@nationallooncenter.org or mailed to

National Loon Center
Attention David Nielsen
PO Box 642,
Crosslake, MN 56442

Artistic Guidelines

- Artists are expected to use sustainable materials to support the Center's commitment to environmental stewardship and regenerative practices.
- Artists should consider using materials that enhance natural light, as this space will receive plenty of sunlight throughout the day.
- Artist to provide input on integrated lighting and additional lighting options that may affect the proposed piece, such as spot or task lighting.)
- The proposed solution must be a permanent fixture. Material, form, and mounting must align with a permanent installation strategy.
- The artist is required to either perform the work themselves or oversee the installation of the proposed design.

Design Submission and Guidance:

- Artists should keep in mind that the audience will be diverse and include all ages, so designs need to be suitable for public display. Designs that are religious, political, or sexual in nature will not be accepted. Also, logos and advertisements are not permitted in the design. As explained below, a review panel will evaluate designs to ensure they follow these guidelines. The panel has the sole authority to reject any design that it deems does not comply.
- Core themes of the installation should draw inspiration from the Loon's anatomy (plumage and patterning), habits, and the surrounding ecosystem. This installation will be placed inside the entry space and serves as the first touchpoint in the National Loon Center experience.
- This installation will be seen from different angles. Think about how the experience of the piece might change when approaching the building versus viewing it from underneath at the entrance.
- Please review the attached architectural documentation for details about location, size, and architectural considerations.

Budget and Compensation

The total project budget of \$250,000 is inclusive of all costs associated with the artwork, including but not limited to:

- Artist fees
- Design and engineering
- Materials and fabrication
- Lighting and electrical components
- Transportation and delivery
- Installation labor and equipment
- Insurance, permits, and taxes
- Travel and lodging, if required
- Contingency

The selected artist will be responsible for managing all project costs within the approved budget.

Payment will be made in accordance with the milestone schedule established in the Artist Agreement.

Engineering, Code, and Safety Compliance

The selected artist will be responsible for ensuring that the artwork complies with all applicable building codes, life-safety requirements, and structural standards.

- Structural engineering review and stamped drawings may be required.
- The artwork must meet applicable load, safety, and fire requirements.
- All designs are subject to review and approval by the National Loon Center, the project architect, and consulting engineers.
- Final installation methods must not compromise the building structure or public safety.

Insurance and Liability Insurance

The selected artist will be required to carry appropriate insurance coverage, which may include:

- Commercial General Liability
- Workers' Compensation (if applicable)
- Any additional coverage required for fabrication or installation activities

Specific insurance limits and indemnification requirements will be defined in the Artist Agreement.

Maintenance and Conservation

As a condition of selection, the artist will provide:

- A written maintenance and care guide outlining recommended cleaning, inspection, and long-term care
 - Identification of materials with known maintenance or conservation considerations
- The National Loon Center will assume responsibility for routine maintenance following installation unless otherwise specified in the Artist Agreement.

Deaccession, Relocation, or Removal

The National Loon Center reserves the right to relocate, modify, remove, or deaccession the artwork if necessary due to safety concerns, building renovations, damage, or changes in the facility's use.

Reasonable efforts may be made to notify the artist; however, no ongoing obligation for consultation is implied unless expressly stated in the Artist Agreement.

Intellectual Property and Moral Rights

Artists acknowledge that installing a permanent work may require future modification, relocation, or removal.

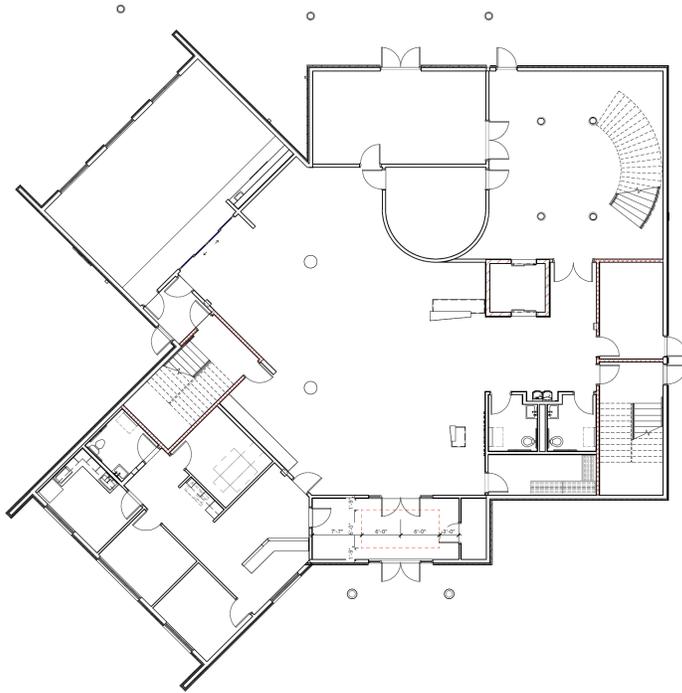
To the extent permitted by law, the selected artist agrees to waive any claims under the Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA) or similar moral rights statutes, as further detailed in the Artist Agreement.

Questions and Communication

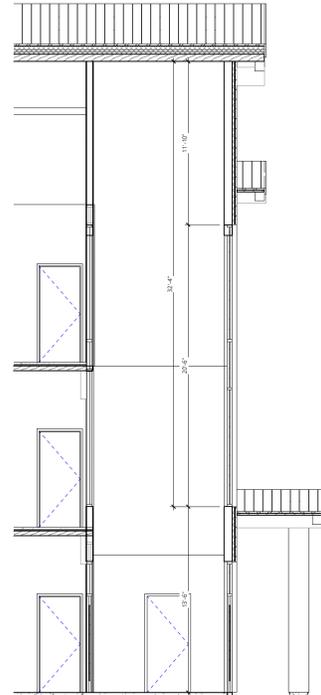
Questions regarding this Call for Artists must be submitted in writing by February 16, 2026, to david@nationallooncenter.org.

Architectural Information

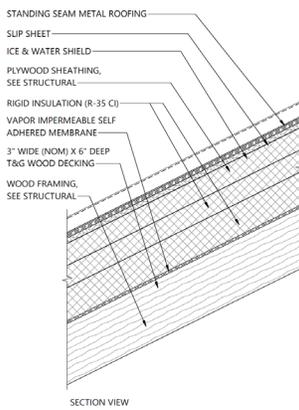
Vestibule Location and Size Restrictions



1 VESTIBULE ART INSTALLATION
1/8" = 1'-0"



2 ART INSTALLATION SECTION
1/8" = 1'-0"



R-2 STANDING SEAM METAL ROOF, INSULATION OVER WOOD DECKING



Architectural Considerations

- Overall activation footprint: 6 ft. deep x 12 ft. wide x 32 ft. 4 in. tall. Size restrictions may be subject to change.
- Weight limit: one ton
- This is an interior installation, but it will be subject to exterior elements when the entry doors are opened upon entry.
- Size restrictions may be subject to change
- Installation must be suspended from the deck above.
- Installation must not impede pedestrian traffic inside the vestibule.
- Artist to provide estimated weight as part of proposal.
- Artists are expected to utilize low-VOC + sustainable materials.
- The artist will receive a warm shell to perform the installation.
- Artists coordinate power, data, and blocking needs directly with the project architect.

COPYRIGHT LICENSE AGREEMENT – NATIONAL LOON CENTER

By submitting an Application to the National Loon Center (“NLC”) for evaluation and consideration for the permanent art fixture (“installation”), each author, owner, or artist (“Artist”) of the Work agrees to the following:

1. In accordance with the requirements of the NLC Guidelines, and as consideration for acceptance of the design submitted by Artist (“Work”) for evaluation and consideration NLC, Artist hereby grants and agrees to grant to NLC and its affiliates an exclusive, right and license to use, reproduce, publicly perform, display, transmit, profit from, and distribute the Work, including translate, alter, modify, and create derivative works of the Work, including as to any additional authorship of the Work, in any and all media whether now or hereafter known or devised and by any and all technologies and means of delivery whether now or hereafter known or devised.
2. NLC will have and retain exclusive ownership of, and title to, the item or work of visual art created by the Artist representing the Work (the “Article”).
3. The Artist will retain ownership of the copyright for the Work in accordance with this Copyright License Agreement and a subsequent Agreement provided upon acceptance of the Work by NLC.
4. Artist agrees to provide to NLC a written, absolute, irrevocable waiver, in favor of NLC, from each individual who is an author (sole or joint) of any of the Work or Article.
5. If Artist’s Work is accepted, Artist agrees to execute an Agreement as provided by NLC.
6. The term of this agreement commences upon submission of the NLC Artist Application. If the Work is rejected for the event, this Copyright License Agreement ends at the time of rejection. If the Work is accepted, the Artist will enter into an Agreement for the installation. If an Agreement between the Artist and NLC cannot be reached, NLC will reject the Work, and this Copyright License Agreement will end.
7. Artist confirms the Work is original to the author(s), has not copied anyone else’s work, and the Work does not infringe any other work.
8. The artist warrants to NLC that it has the full right, power, and authority to enter into this agreement and to fulfill its obligations, and that it has not and will not grant any encumbrances in, to, or under the Work during installation.
9. Artist agrees not to assign, license, or reproduce the same Work or Article to or for a third party if the Work is accepted for inclusion in the Center.

10. This agreement shall be binding upon and shall insure to the benefit of the parties hereto and their respective successors and assigns.
11. Artist agrees to take the steps necessary to affect this agreement.