

Art Installations

The playa is a tabula rasa, a blank canvas upon which many a fantastic vision has been realized. Submarines, swimmers, fire-breathing thistles, serpents, chandeliers, grandfather clocks and mythical creatures have emerged from the playa. A ship built from burnt pianos has sailed on Lake Lahontan's parched surface. Fanciful structures including a gigantic duck, an illuminated mosque made of recycled plastic, a pyramid containing a camera obscura, a shopping mall, a two-story maze, a gigantic ammonite, a Byzantine clock tower, a rocket-launching pad, a spinning fire cage, and towering mud phalluses have risen and vanished. Limited only by participants' imaginations, the variety of art installations seen at Burning Man is remarkable. You can learn more about these installations in *The Art of Burning Man*.

There are two kinds of art on the playa. Theme art, based on our annual theme, is given special placement along our city's walkways, which intersect the man. A limited amount of funding is available to interactive theme art projects; you must read our guidelines to learn how and when to apply. All other art (not based on the theme) is called playa art and is mapped between the theme art and the city. Both theme and playa art are also mapped in the deep playa beyond the city.

Of course many unpredictable factors including wind and weather make art-making on the playa a difficult and challenging endeavor. To understand what you're up against, and to register your project, read our [Art Installation Guidelines](#).

Located in center camp, the Artery is the artists' headquarters on the playa. Artists must check in here to register, to find out the location of their installation on the playa, and to receive help with their projects. A large map of the art lives here, and volunteers assist the public with questions and issues related to the art.

Art Installation Guidelines

Responsibility

Whether you create a theme related artwork or that vision you've had in your head for some time, anyone making a commitment to creating art at Burning Man must take responsibility for all aspects of that creation. From filling out the art installation form, developing a dialogue with us, arrival on the playa, protecting your art, and cleanup accountability, every aspect of creating art must be taken seriously.

Artwork must be sufficiently secured against high winds and intense weather conditions that often arise on the playa. If there are guy wires that are necessary to the construction they must be flagged. Please read about [securing structures](#).

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Artwork must be sufficiently illuminated at night, including rebar, guy wires and any other part of the installation that somebody could crash into. Viable lighting solutions include LEDs, blinky lights, glow sticks (these would need to be replenished as necessary), reflective tape and the like. Note that it's a darn good idea to use something that cannot be stolen or removed.

To prevent irreparable environmental damage, no large holes may be dug in the playa floor. If you need help securing your structure, please contact the Artery, and we can help you with alternative solutions.

Camping is not allowed at any art installation on the open playa.

Communication

After you fill out the art installation questionnaire, someone from our Art Team will be contacting you, ready to help and assist you. We need as much information as you can possibly give us, including a description and diagrams of your piece. Starting a dialogue with you about your artwork will enable us to help make your Burning Man experience the best it can be.

Challenge

Creating art on the playa of Black Rock City is like no canvas or gallery that you may have ever experienced before. The challenges are many. You must consider the extreme physical conditions of the desert, the logistics of transporting props, building materials and equipment to this remote desert site, and the difficulty of maintaining tools and equipment in a place that has no service grid or ready market of resources.

You must also consider the inherently chaotic nature of Black Rock City itself. All of these challenges are aspects of the medium in which you are working, so plan carefully and be patient. Your creation may not happen in precisely the way you envision it, but that's OK. The struggle to adapt and to survive is an essential part of this experience and can lead to unexpected discoveries.

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Interactivity

We challenge you to create something that will Inspire, Engage, Question, Puzzle, Amuse, Seduce and otherwise Influence the citizens of Black Rock City. Interactive art is our particular obsession. Interactive work convenes society around itself. It generates roles. It provokes actions. It transforms participants into active contributors to a creative process.

Cleanup Accountability - To Burn Or Not To Burn

You arrive on a clean blank canvas - The Playa. And that is the way you should leave it. Everything you bring to live, create & burn **MUST BE REMOVED**. Nothing, absolutely nothing, should be left at your art site or camp when you leave. Cleaning up and Leaving No Trace are paramount. As citizens of Black Rock City we are held to a higher standard.

Important: Fire and Flame Effects

IMPORTANT: If your artwork deals with FIRE in any of the following ways:

- Open Flame:
- Setting your Artwork on Fire Flame Effects:
- Stationary Art, Mutant Vehicle or Flame Throwers Pyrotechnic Display
- Combination of: Fire, Hazardous Materials, Explosives, Projectiles or Pressurized Gases

It is mandatory that you read and utilize the fire safety guidelines that we have developed. You will also be required to fill out the Flame Effects or Pyrotechnic section of the Questionnaire and include your Playa Protection - Burn Scar Prevention plan.

To be prepared for these questions, please read the information below: Playa Protection & Burn Scar Prevention Creating Dangerous Art Safely

If you have any questions concerning Pyrotechnics or Flame Effects, please email [pyro \(at\) burningman \(dot\) com](mailto:pyro@burningman.com) or [flame-effects \(at\) burningman \(dot\) com](mailto:flame-effects@burningman.com).