

Guidelines for Selecting Artwork for the Hospital Environment

The Illuminations exhibit is on display throughout the Cancer Center, and is intended to shed light on the human experience, contribute healing qualities to the hospital environment, and offer patients a visual reference point for reflection as they are waiting for treatment.

In selecting artwork for the exhibition, the Illuminations Committee considers these goals as well as the needs of our patients. To increase your chances for a successful review, it may be helpful for you to consider your work from the point of view of someone who is experiencing a heightened awareness of loss, fear and distraction, or feeling physically nauseated or fatigued. Patients may make connections to artwork that a healthy individual does not necessarily make. Additionally, we try to be aware of each individual's personal journey through his or her experience of cancer.

The Committee also takes into consideration "evidence-based" guidelines set forth in Ulrich and Gilpin's *Healing Arts: Nutrition for the Soul* (2003) along with feedback from MGH patients and visitors. These recommendations are as follows:

Landscapes/ Waterscapes/Flowers

- Representational vs. abstract
- Calm weather
- Visual depth (a sense of 3 dimensions) with openness in the immediate foreground
- Landscapes during the warmer seasons/garden scenes with openness in the foreground
- Landscapes with low hills and distant mountains
- Scenes with positive cultural artifacts such as barns and older houses
- Calm water
- Healthy flowers
- Familiar Floral Varieties

Figurative Art

- Emotionally positive facial expressions
- Positively portrayed relationships between individuals
- Generational and cultural diversity
- People at leisure in places with prominent nature
- People participating in the arts, such as music and dance

Based on these guidelines, along with MGH patient/visitor feedback, we typically avoid the following:

- Black and white scenes/night scenes
- Bare tree limbs
- Rain/Snow scenes
- Dark colors
- Predominantly red art pieces
- Close-up animals staring directly at the viewer/predatory animals in aggressive poses
- Outdoor scenes with overcast or foreboding weather

Thank you for appreciating our sensitivity to these issues. Please feel free to contact us with further questions about appropriateness.