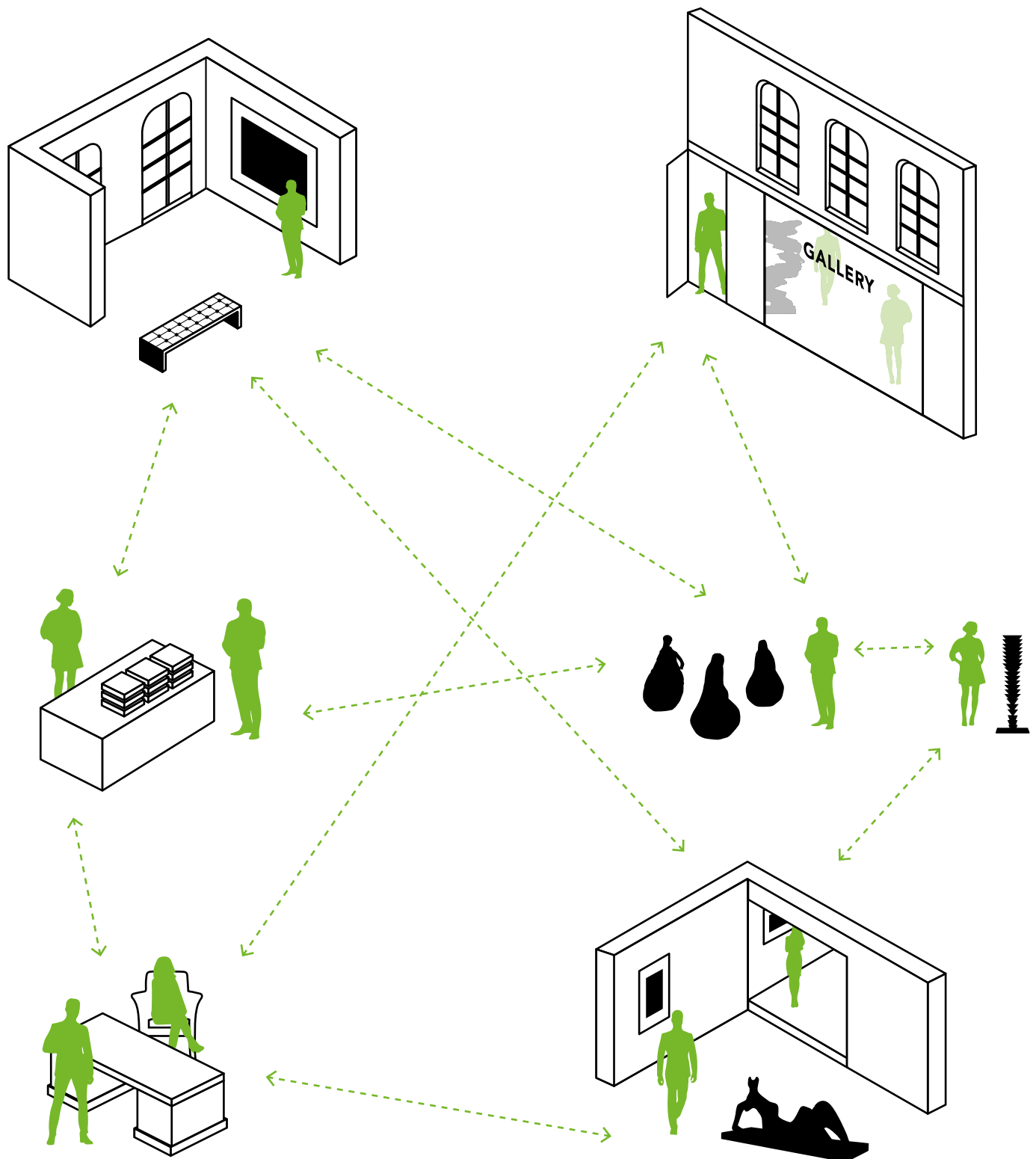# Galleries in Times of Social Distancing

Spatial Toolkit

Version 1.1 – May 2020

tompostmadesign

Introduction

We all, both as individuals and as organisations, live and operate in highly uncertain times due to COVID-19. A lot of what we know and do is increasingly being questioned and no firm solutions or end dates are given for the current circumstances.

Notwithstanding this challenging situation, we felt the need to use our expertise in spatial design for art related spaces, to explore and identify solutions and possibilities to help shape a new generic spatial design vision for galleries within the given boundaries of social distancing as we know them to date.

The suggestions in this document reflect our practical and spatial interpretations of existing guidelines from industry related organisations, international governmental guidelines and restrictions, implemented and evaluated solutions and findings from museums, galleries and restaurants from regions that have already opened up and online research.

Our toolkit is by no means a 'one size fits all' solution but is meant merely to trigger alternative thinking with regard to finding solutions for spatial challenges related to social distancing. It can also be used as a toolkit from which galleries can pick and choose what is relevant for them and further develop their own approach by making it location, site and situation specific, subject always to the applicable local or international COVID-19 rules and regulations.

Furthermore, we hope this document allows and challenges galleries to look at the spatial interventions from an aesthetical point of view as well and realise they might be lasting longer than originally expected. And encourage them to develop and execute a well-designed plan that offers visitors an optimal visitor journey and places art at the core, without getting distracted by gallery unworthy spatial interventions.

We believe this document could also support galleries in:

- Developing protocols to submit to local authorities
- Reassuring visitors
- Making visitors and staff feel at ease
- Enabling visitors to move around easily and get to the desired destination
- Enabling visitors to focus on the art presented

We will update this document on a regular basis and integrate new findings and insights. Therefore, it is not a static document, but a permanent work in progress.

Version 1.1 – May 2020
The update history can be found on the last page of this document.

Table of Contents

General

Occupancy

Distance

- Use advised national or local Social Distance of 1 m (WHO, HK), 1,5 m (EUR), 1,8 m (USA) or 2 m (CH) for all obvious situations, like desks, table set-ups, waiting lines etc.
- Anticipate an Intelligent Social Distancing approach for staff and visitors throughout the more free spaces in between.

standing

walking slow

Activities

- Distinguish different basic activities of a person. From standing, walking, turning corners, watching art to meeting people.
- In times of Social Distancing (SD) we can indicate the occupied space by a person in terms of units SD. That results in 'running SD' compared to running meters/feet for length and width. And 'square SD' for the occupied surface compared to square meters/feet.
- For example the space taken for slow walking then coincides with 1 SD wide, 2 SD long and 2 SD².
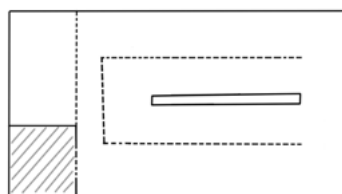
walking fast

overtaking

turning

watching art

- Matrix of potential activities:
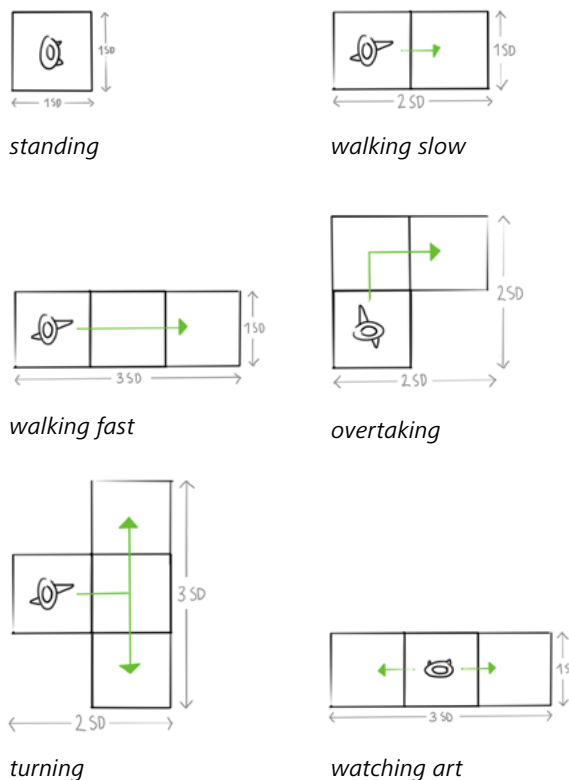
Activities		Occupied Space per person in Social Distance of				
		1 SD	1,0 m	1,5 m	1,8 m	2,0 m
standing (queue)		1 SD²	1,0 m²	2,3 m²	3,2 m²	4,0 m²
standing (watching)		3 SD²	3,0 m²	6,8 m²	9,7 m²	12,0 m²
slow walking		2 SD²	2,0 m²	4,5 m²	6,5 m²	8,0 m²
fast walking		3 SD²	3,0 m²	6,8 m²	9,7 m²	12,0 m²
overtaking		3 SD²	3,0 m²	6,8 m²	9,7 m²	12,0 m²
turning		4 SD²	4,0 m²	9,0 m²	13,0 m²	16,0 m²

*occupied space in m² per activity for different Social Distance*
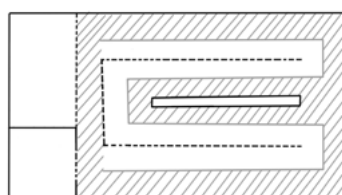
General

Defining occupancy

- Base occupancy on the actual spaces used by people and on their activities.
- Leave out spaces prohibited for visitorss, transition and entrance areas.
- Take into account local protocols and regulations for required m² per person.
- Example: referring to the simple layout on the right, imagine a gallery space divided in entrance 10%, lining up 10%, and 80% exhibition areas. The exhibition areas are used fifty-fifty for slow walking/browsing and for faster walking.
- The outcome of the calculation for the occupancy load in this example is an average of 2,3 SD² per person for the gallery as a whole.
- When using a Social Distance of 1 m, 1,5 m, 1,8 m and 2 m, then 1 SD² would be 1 m², 2,25 m², 3,24 m² and 4 m², respectively.
- For the average 2,44 SD² in our example the occupancy rate for this gallery would then be 2,3 m², 5,18 m², 7,45 m² and 9,2 m² per person respectively.
- Based on activities of people and clear insights of measures taken in terms of flow, guiding and restricting, one might consider bringing forward specified calculations for occupancy.
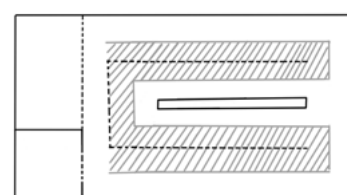- These calculations might be added to protocols and permit requests.

floor plan gallery, entrance area (10%), without people
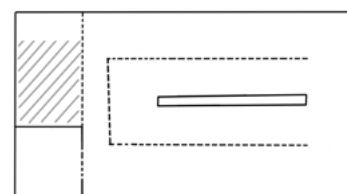
floor plan gallery, lining up area (10%), people are standing

floor plan gallery, slow lane (40%), fifity-fifty walking and browsing

floor plan gallery, fast lane (40%), for fast walking

- New technology such as digital people counters, apps, etc. can help monitoring congestion and access, limit the amount of additional staff and assistants needed and help manage crowds and flows.
- Take into account the amount of staff already present when defining the max occupancy.
- Occupancy management per space is possible, but might need extra waiting areas per space.


automatic access system

General

Flow

Reorganise flow

- Several measures can be taken in order
  to reorganise and optimise the flow inside
  the gallery.

- Analysis of the flow and behaviour:
  investigate routing and flow of people in the
  floor plan. Look into behavioural patterns of
  people when lining up, walking, crossing,
  choosing, meeting and seating at specific places
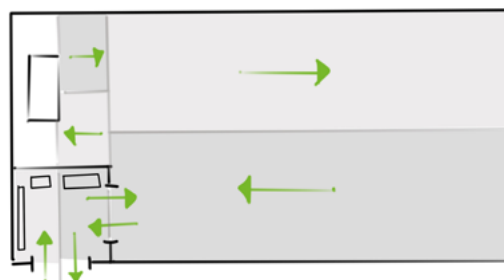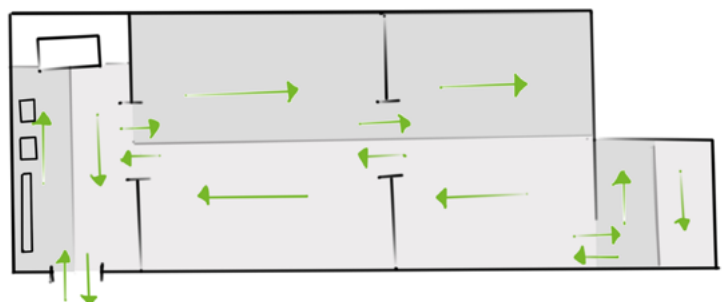 and destinations.
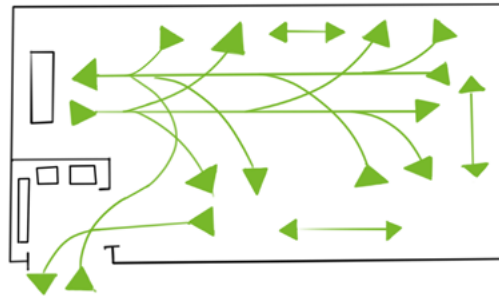
typical mixed flow in a single space
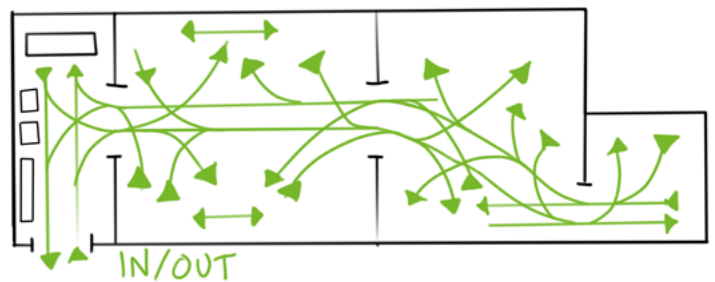
typical mixed flow in a few adjacent spaces

- Organise separate flows inside the gallery.
- Simplify routes to prevent unnecessary changing
 of direction and crossing.

separate flows in a single space

separate flows in a few adjacent spaces

General

Flow with different art typologies

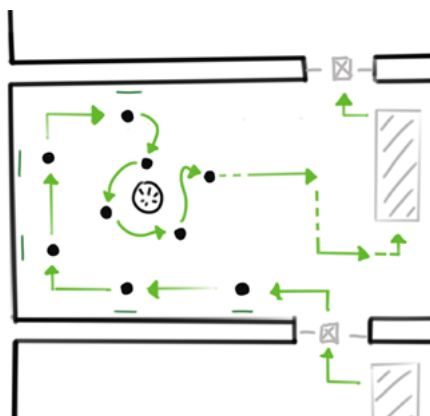**Art typology 1**: 2D artworks on walls.
- Path on the perimeter of the room.
- More distance for larger artworks.
- Limit occupancy.
- Possibly separate flow lanes from artwork viewing points.
- Rearrange artworks considering SD.
- Appointed waiting area at the entrance if necessary and possible. Staff, manual or automatic turnstile to control balanced occupancy and max. number of visitors.
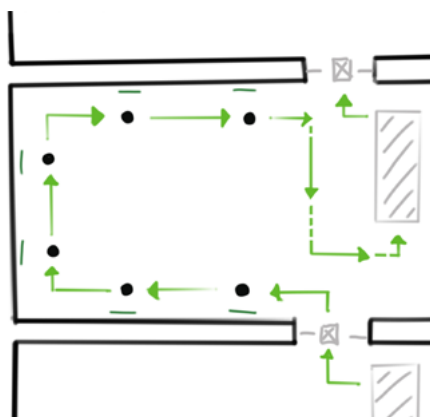
2D artworks on walls

**Art typology 2**: 3D artworks and 2D artworks on walls.
- Path on the perimeter of the room when there are also 2D artworks on wall + organised flow around 3D artworks.
- Limit occupancy.
- Possibly separate flow lanes from artwork viewing points or Stop & Go logic.
- Rearrange artworks considering SD.
- Appointed waiting area at the entrance if necessary and possible. Staff, manual or automatic turnstile to control occupancy and max. number of visitors.

3D artworks on walls

Art typology 3: Spatial artworks (i.e. Richard Serra or Carlos Amorales).
- Free flow but limited number of visitors.
- Time slots or limited stay.
- Appointed waiting area at the entrance if necessary.
- Staff, manual or automatic turnstile to control occupancy and max. number of visitors.
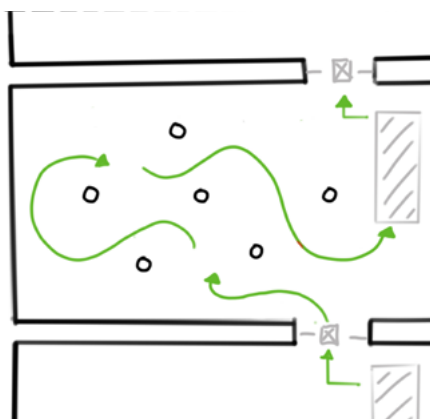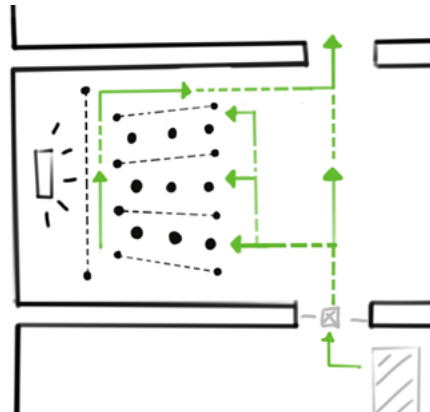

spatial artworks
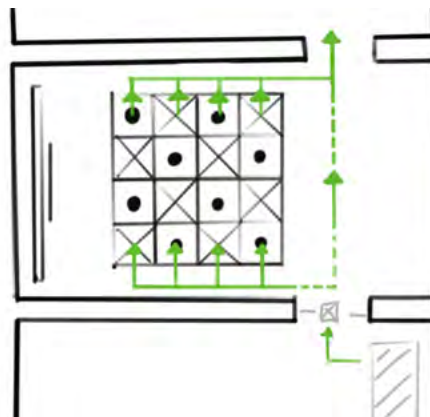
General

Art typology 4: Iconic artworks.
- High appeal and large crowd.
- Rearrange artwork position inside the room.
- Artwork viewpoint organised in grid or lanes.
- Time slots or limited stay.
- Appointed waiting area at the entrance.
- Staff, manual or automatic turnstile to control occupancy and max. number of visitors.

iconic artworks

Art typology 5: Audience seating in a room.
- Projection.
- Reading.
- Events with seated audience.
- Limited number of visitors / Time slots / Limited stay.
- Appointed waiting area at the entrance if possible.
- Staff, manual or automatic turnstile to control occupancy and max. number of visitors.
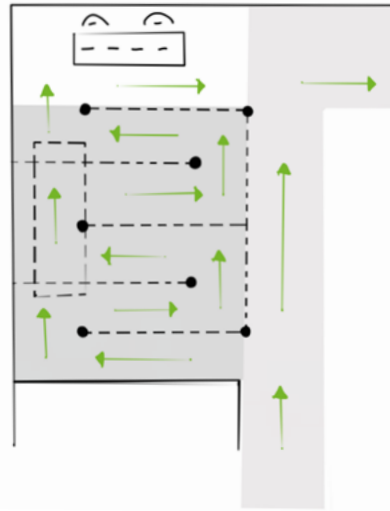

audience seating in a room
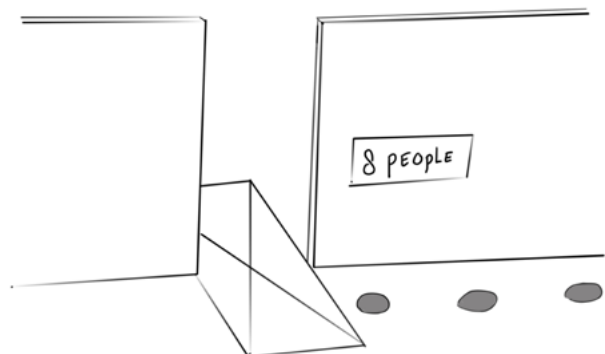
General

Waiting before exhibition areas

- Organise separate waiting areas per function and destination, like entrance, desks, restrooms and exhibition area, each having their own lining up system. This is especially important for events and during peak hours.
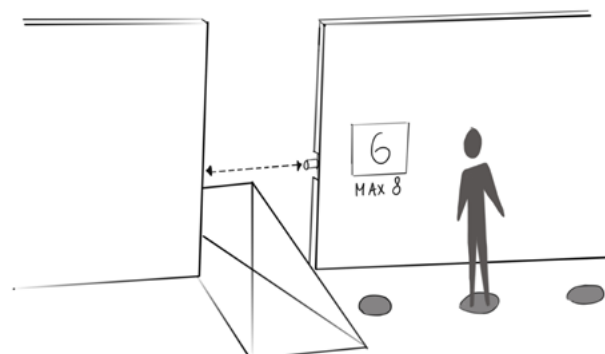

waiting and lining up for desk

Waiting inside exhibition areas

- Some exhibition rooms or parts of the room can be temporarily transformed into waiting areas, especially when a limited number of visitors are allowed into the next room (i.e. spatial artworks, etc).
- Occupancy check with a scanner.

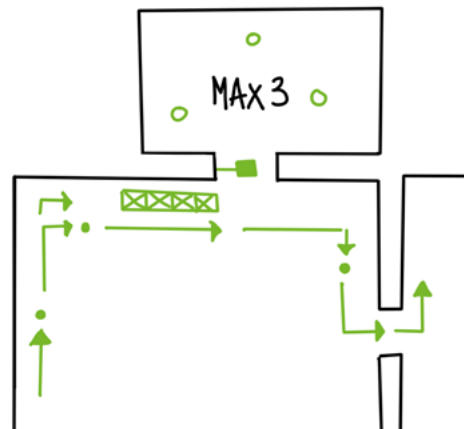*waiting and checking occupancy by visitors themselves*

*waiting and occupancy checked by scanner*

General

Small spaces

- Limited number of visitors inside small spaces.
- Visual check by visitors, before entering.
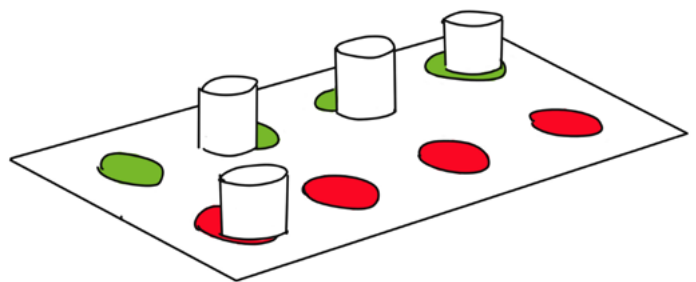- Seperated waiting area from the main visitors flow.

small room strategy

- Use simple and functional devices to regulate occupancy in small rooms.
- Use devices that are not hand operated, like turnstiles or foot-devices.
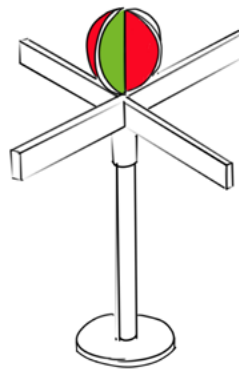
entering small room for 1 person using a turnstile

entering small room for 4 people using a foot device

Transition areas

- No artworks in transition areas (gates, doors, staircases, aisles), especially during events and peak hours.

General

Lining up

- Guiding and dividing elements for lining up: floor markers and physical vertical markers.
- Floor markers: guiding lines, cross lines for stopping and dots.
- Physical vertical markers like rope and stanchions.
- Place the dividing elements at the required Social Distance.
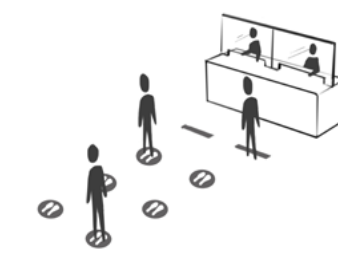- Lines and dots at the required Social Distance.

rope and stanchions plus stop
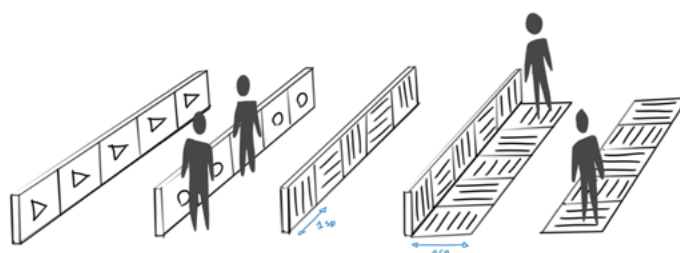
rope and stanchions plus dots and stop

*lines plus dots and stop*

dots and stop

- Fence elements with designed pattern at the required Social Distance.

*designed fence elements with SD pattern*

Lanes

- Organise flow by creating lanes: at the entrance, outside, at the desk/restrooms etc., especially for events and during peak hours
- One-way and two-way lanes to divide oncoming flows.
- Indicate lanes by lines on the floor, carpet changes, printed carpet or special tape.
- Encourage people to stay in their own lane and walk straight ahead.
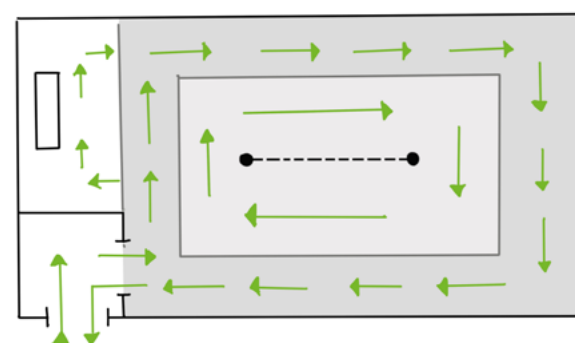
Separate slow and fast lanes in a single space

- If possible slow lanes for slowing down, for watching art and stopping. Fast lanes for overtaking and moving faster to a further destination.
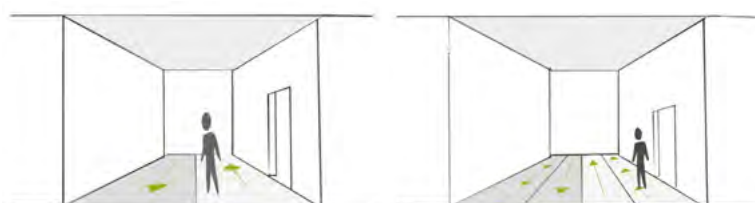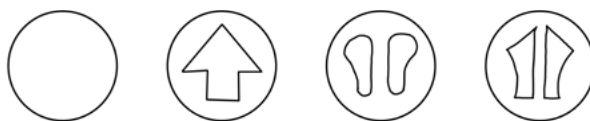

*floor elements like lines and carpet changes for indication of lanes*

General

Floor markers

- Floor markers: a few simple and easy to understand Social Distancing symbols on the floor. Understandable from all sides.
- Feet-dot for standing and distance. A few feet-dots indicate the desired distance.
- Repetitive coloured dots indicate distance, line ups and lanes.

- A small cross line for stop and longer (double) lines for guiding flow and direction.
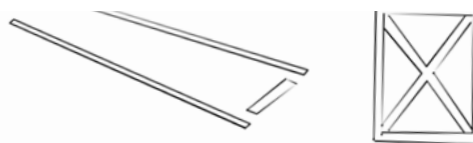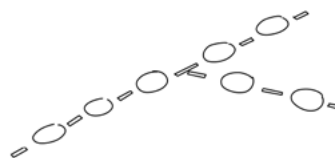
- Arrow-dot for walking and direction.
- More arrow-dots together indicate a one-way aisle or crossing.
- Combinations of dots and small lines in between indicate desired distance, direction and turns.

- No stopping and no seating places are indicated by a square and one or two diagonals.

dots as floor markers

lines as floor markers
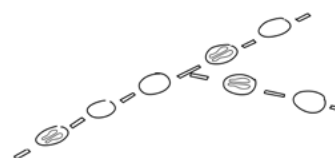

direction, distance and turning indicated with short lines and coloured dots

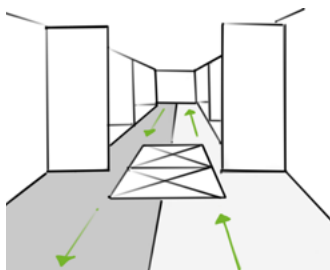*direction, distance and turning indicated with arrow-dots*
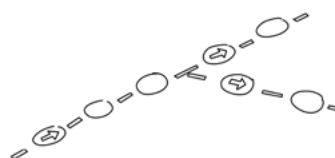
direction, distance and turning indicated with short lines, coloured dots and arrow-dots

direction, distance and turning indicated with short lines, coloured dots and feet-dots

diagonals in a square indicating area to be kept free

General

Vertical markers

- Vertical signs that communicate information about destinations and directions. Especially during events and peak hours.
- Lower or higher attachments to standard stanchions. Or self-standing poles with symbol or text signs.
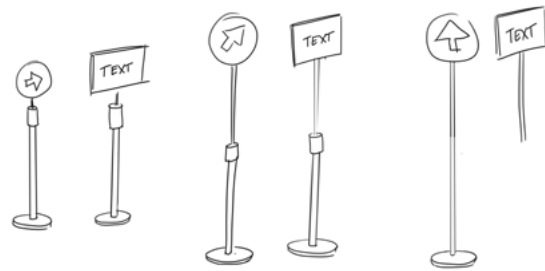
vertical signs for additional information

- Use clear IN and OUT symbol and text markers for separate destinations. Especially during events and peak hours.
- Indicate clearly along each lane where a specific area can be entered or where a specific line-up starts.
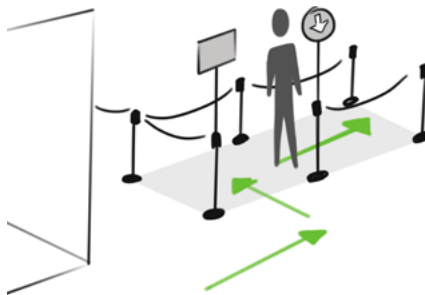
vertical signs for additional information

- Existing elements like benches, furniture elements or movable walls can be used to regulate the flow.
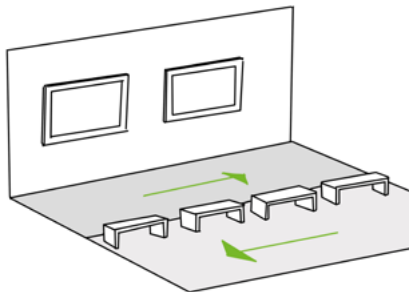
benches can be used for separating lanes and flows

General

Floor plan

Reorganise and balance floor plan

- Several measures can be taken in order to reorganise the exhibition area and its rooms.

- Flow management per section and per room.
- Balanced occupancy.
- During events and peak visits: guards with clickers, automatic counter at the entrance of each room, turnstiles, etc.
- Dedicated areas where people can wait before being admitted to the next room.
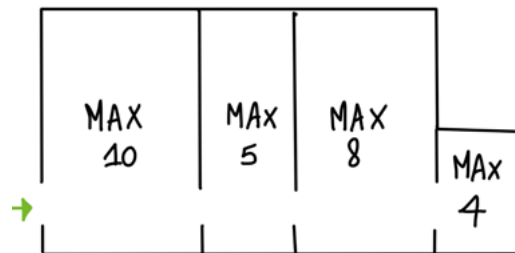
well balanced and managed occupancy between rooms and sections

One-way

- Look for the possibility of one-way routing for a single space gallery.
- Choose for the entire gallery one direction, clockwise or counterclockwise.
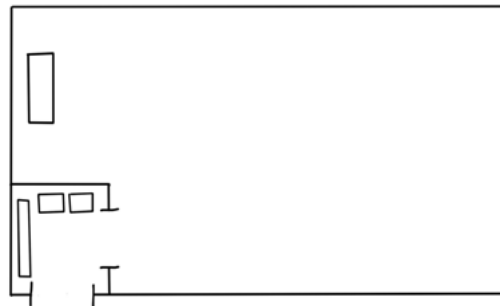
typical floor plan of a single space gallery

floor plan of a single space gallery with one-way set-up

General

Look for the possibility of one-way routing for a multiple space gallery.
- Use the one-way routing per room.
- Choose for the entire gallery one direction, clockwise or counterclockwise.
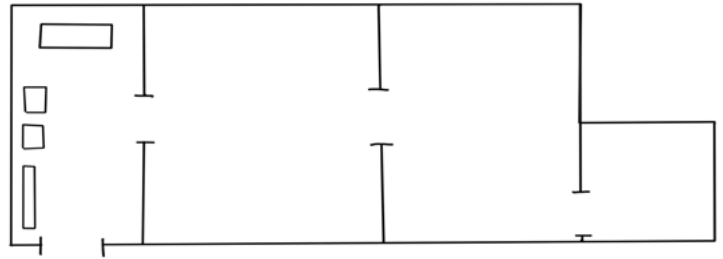
typical floor plan of a multiple space gallery
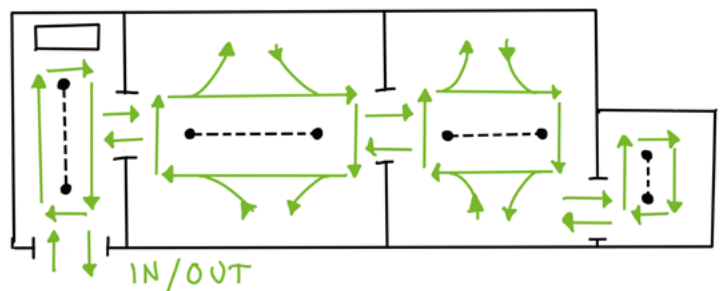
floor plan of a multiple space gallery with one-way set-up
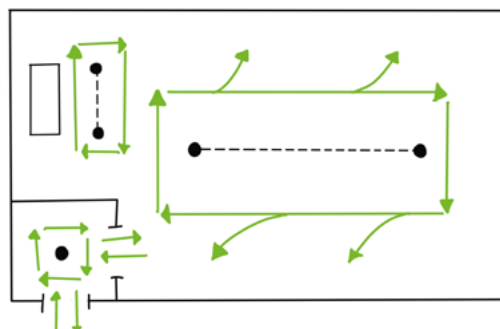
New partitions

- Large rooms without a clear routing can be temporarily reshaped in width and length with partitions and barriers and other design solutions.
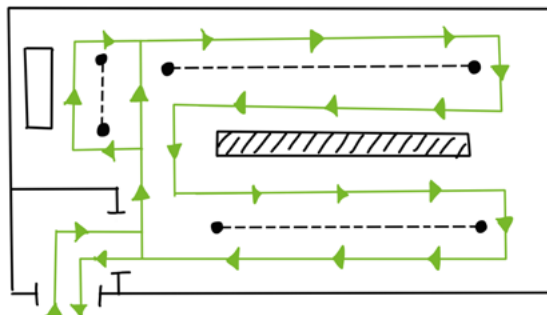
floor plan of a single space with new partitions

Short cuts

- Provide enough short cuts and loops for staff and/or visitors in large rooms or in case of complex exhibition routes.
- The flow of visitors will be more steady and less chaotic.
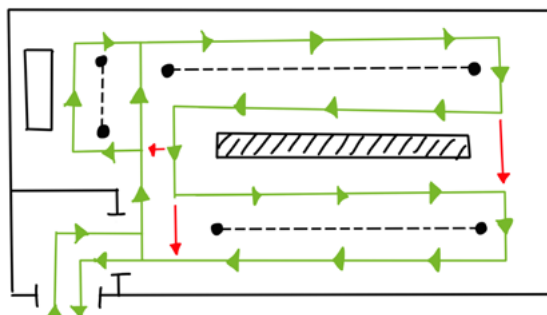
floor plan of a single space with one-way set-up and short cuts

Functional

Regular visits

Measures

- Low visitor numbers: abundance of space; reservations not needed; intuitive management by the gallery staff.
- Peak in visitor numbers: more visitors during opening days, events in the city, high season, etc.; management tools: online registration, time slots, additional staff.

Entrance

- Door stays open and waiting line outside and inside the gallery.
- Door areas and small entrance areas marked as no stopping areas.
- When possible separate IN and OUT, at least during peak hours.
- Keep small entrance areas entirely empty.

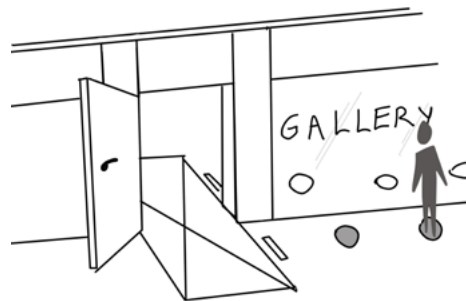*lining up outside and/or inside for entering/exiting gallery*

Health check unit

- If a health check is carried out, this is best done before visitors enter the gallery area. If tested positive one can easily leave again.
- A health unit can be combined with other temporary relocated functions.

health unit added in front of the building

Door area

- When possible use separate doors or use front and back doors for separate flows in and out.
- If needed create extra entries/exits for visitors and for staff as a long term improvement.
- Logical place to check your visitors for their online tickets or occupancy in general. If not allowed in (yet) one can still easily step aside.
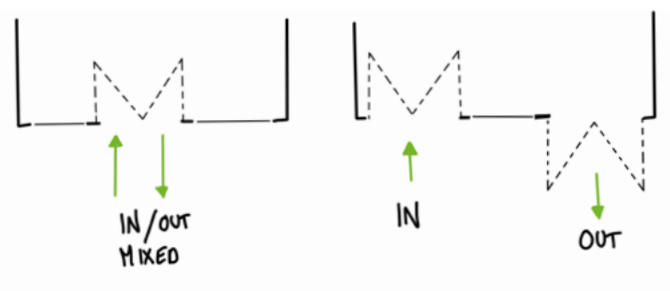
present entrance situation   *new entrance situation*

Functional

Functions inside

- Analyse present situation and mixed flow.
- Linear set-up of all functions (table, catalogues, bookshop, gift shop, selling desk) with possibly two lanes, one for standing and one for passing.
- Provide sanitation points at the entrance and along the exhibition route (gel dispenser).
- Restrooms: open doors, waiting area in front, occupancy protocol, health measures.
- Coat check: safe, clear and welcoming system both for visitors and staff.

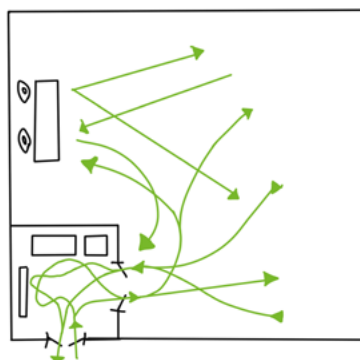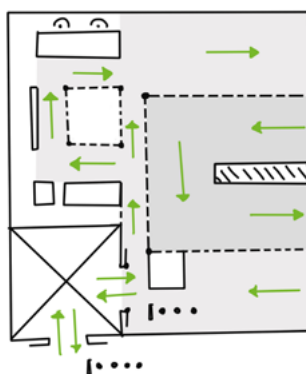*typical gallery front space floor plan with usual set-up and flow*

Gift shop and bookshop

- Gift and bookshop with one-way routing and potential waiting area.
- Consider creative solutions for gift shop and bookshop.
- Create an online store available through gallery app/website.
- Shop only as a showcase.
- Shop only as a pick-up point, when delivery options are not feasible for the gallery.

gallery front space floor plan with set-up for regular visits

- Desks either wider or with shield protection.

wider desk with protective shield and hand out space

Art space

- Set-up a simple and functional one-way routing where the limited number of visitors and the abundance of space make the visitor feel welcome and comfortable.
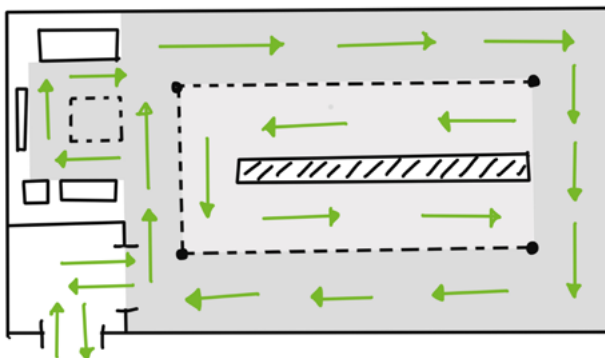
gallery space with set-up for regular visits

Functional

Events visits

Measures

- Temporary bigger amount of visitors.
- Events management: invitation only, online registration, time slots, extended opening hours, extended opening days, additional staff.
- Smaller time slots require less waiting area.

gallery space with set-up for events

Functional

Entrance

- Waiting line outside extended to a proper waiting area, possibly covered.
- Occupancy host(ess) guides and controls entry and exit.

- To protect staff, special furniture or signing elements can be helpful.
- This could be a dot or a circle on the floor, or a more physical structure.
- Remove or close gift shops and bookshops.
- Regulate drinks hand out and social interactions according to SD rules.
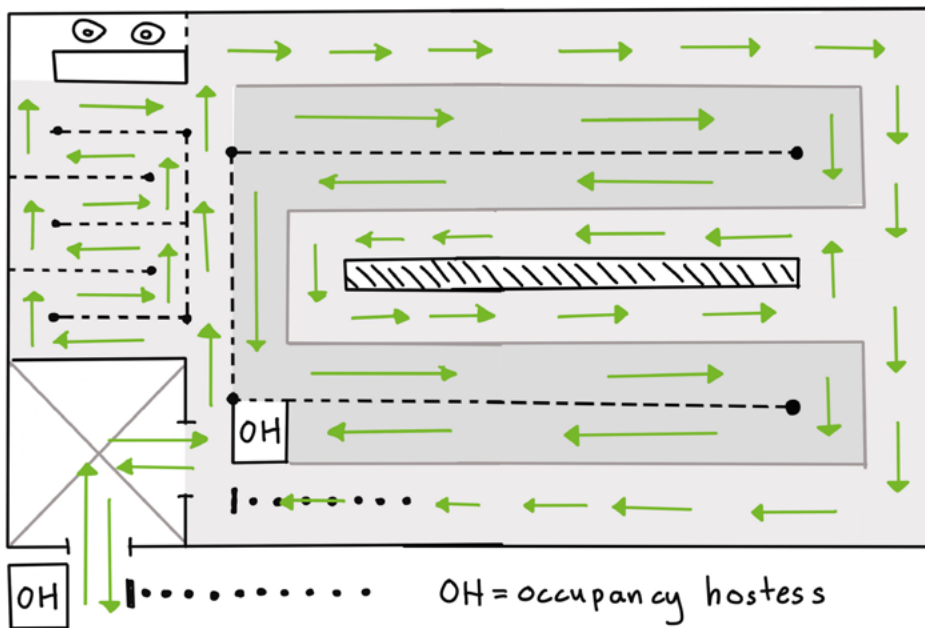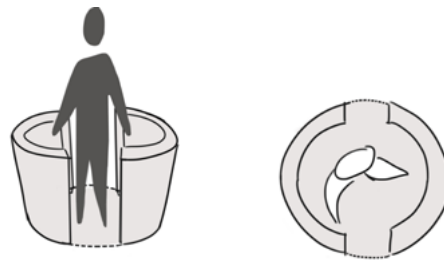

circular fence for host(ess)/guard in 2 parts

- Add temporary space by means of tent or other adjacent space.
- Possibly provide seats and support (water, sanitising gel, etc).
- Potential additional restroom space created outside.
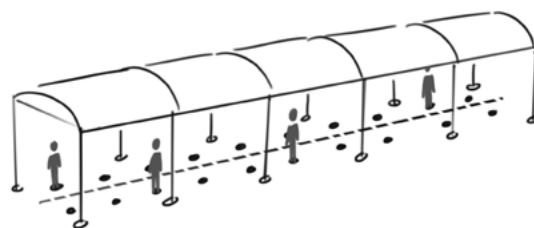
roof shade over waiting line outside

temporary tent outside the gallery with linear set-up for catering and toilet

Functional

Gallery improvements

Elevators, doors

- Inside elevators dots indicate fixed standing positions.
- Indication on the outside for max load of people.
- Waiting area next to the door, not blocking any flow.
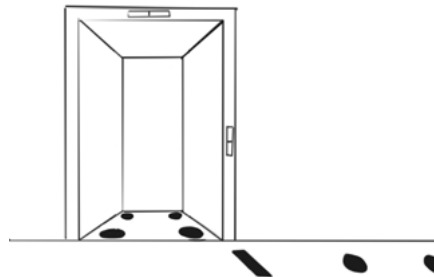
feet-dots inside elevator and waiting line outside

- All doors in the building that are used by visitors have an automatic opening system or stand open.
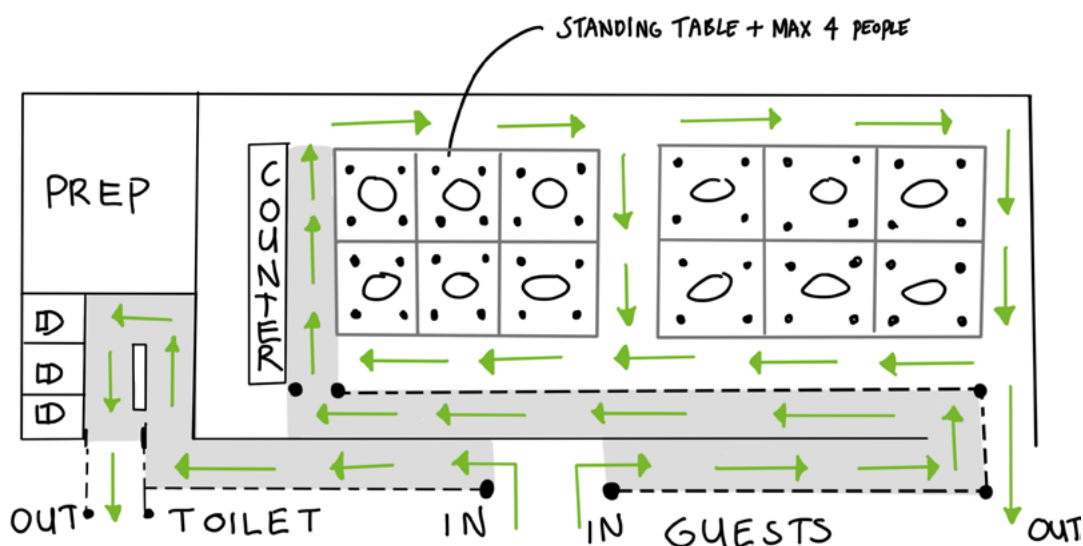- Alternatively not frequently used doors can be equipped with elbow attachments to the handles.

MEP and HVAC

- Check local regulations and new local authorities measures.
- When the system allows it:
- Increase air supply to 6/8 room changes per hour.
- Avoid air recirculation.
- Use displacement ventilation as much as possible.
- Create air zoning of spaces.
- Consider energy consumption levels for lower capacities of the rooms.
  In existing situations: it is possible to create temporary solutions, if planned in advance with the exhibition designer and the technical team.

Communication

Online

Admittance

- Opening hours and days.
- Admittance through small time slots, with a fixed duration.
- Online registration for events.
- Online registration for VIP.
- Regulations for tours and special groups i.e. only in small groups and for specific time slots and following the same fixed routes.
- The total number of visitors allowed within the gallery/event at any one time.

Social Distance

- Indicate the applicable social distance used, 1 m (WHO, HK), 1,5 m (EUR), 1,8 m (USA), 2 m (CH), 10 m² pp (Eur), 20 m² pp (Austria).
- Present floor plan with routing, queuing areas and functions (information desks, cafes, restrooms, etc.).
- Present internationally approved symbols to ensure that language doesn't raise a barrier.
- Sum up repetitive measures used at the gallery.
- Measurements in place to organise visitor flow.
- Explain the protocols, symbols and measures to visually impaired and people in wheelchairs.

Expanded visit

- Combine on site gallery visits with complementary online gallery visits
- Extra online content can be talks, lectures, virtual meetings with the artists and the curator.
- Cooperation and tours with other galleries.

Health measures

- Communicate specific national and/or local restrictions and measures that will have to be followed at the venue.
- Provide links to any and all relevant governmental/local guidelines.
- Availability of mandatory protection gear (masks, gloves, face coverings) at the venue.
- Inform people if and how a health check will be carried out.
- Better visibility of staff as they need (more) authority.
- Support staff visibility by (potentially fashionable and/or branded) clothes, protection gear and masks.
- Potential fashionable and/or branded protection gear and special fashionable clothes, veils and textiles for visitors.

Communication

Gallery

Behaviour

- Rules and measures regarding admittance and behaviour.
- Mandatory and/or advised social distance.
- Advise personal Intelligent Social Distancing for visitors and staff at the venue.
- Floor plan with queuing, routing and functions (information desks, cafes, restrooms, etc.).
- Phasing of visitors and occupancy of visitors per space.
- Symbols and rules for queuing, routing and flow.
- On the spot symbols and rules for elevators, restrooms and doors.
  Rules for approaching staff, explanation of their visibility.
- Add protocol officer to staff for overview of discipline, health and distancing.

Exhibition set-up

- Use advised national or local parameters for builders and shippers: allow for more days and hours for build-up, build-down and art to get in and out.
- For big installations use time slots for different areas and groups of workers.
- Longer working hours and working in shifts.
- Working in small groups.

Health measures

- Health check at first possible moment and place with explanation.
- Mandatory protection gear (masks, gloves, face coverings, anti-bacterial hand gel).
- Hand out of (additional) protection gear at the entrance.
- Availability of sanitisation points at the entrance and along the exhibition route (gel dispenser, additional fountains, etc).
- Audio equipment to be cleaned after use.
- Additional cleaning and protocol for door handles, restrooms, etc according to local and national regulations.
- Protect your staff and visitors and follow international and/or local rules (when stricter) for protection rules and measures.
- Bring fashionable and/or branded protection gear and special fashionable clothes, veils and textiles to visitors' attention.

Colophon

Disclaimer

We emphasise that this document does not in any way provide legal guidance for how galleries can be in compliance with applicable local or international COVID-19 rules and regulations. Each gallery needs to be in compliance with such rules and regulations as are in effect at the relevant time and location. We do not accept any liability for such non-compliance or COVID-19 infections traceable to your gallery.

You are advised to seek external advice on such compliance and inspection and approval of your proposed layout by the relevant governmental authorities whether or not you chose to implement one or more of our ideas. The primary goal of any actualised plans should be to avoid to the greatest extent possible any spread of the COVID-19 virus among visitors and staff.

License