

# AIA New Orleans



A Chapter of The American  
Institute of Architects

## DesCours 2011 - Request for Proposal

### Overview

Thank you for your interest in participating in DesCours 2011, the fifth year of this annual event held in New Orleans the second week of December. DesCours is a ten-day, contemporary architecture and art event that looks towards the future in showcasing experimental, cutting-edge new media and interactive installations while embracing New Orleans rich cultural heritage. During DesCours, internationally recognized architects, designers and artists transform unique, hidden spaces within the French Quarter and Central Business District into destination places for visitors and locals alike.

There are a total of 11-13 artists and architects (individuals and teams) that will be selected through this proposal process and by invitation to participate by creating installations for French Quarter courtyards, downtown building lobbies, rooftops, walkways and other 'hidden' New Orleans spaces. Overall, we are seeking installations that react and respond both to the historic nature of the sites, and to the public audience that views them.

There are two primary conditions for installation sites as indoors or outdoors. The outdoor locations consist of either open courtyards or building rooftops. The interior locations include building lobbies, unoccupied building floors, and covered walkways. All of the locations are 'hidden' from public view, in that they are private, normally closed and/or inaccessible to the public. **All of the locations will be viewed at night**, thus the proposals should respond to this condition. For the outdoor locations we are seeking installations that are viable when exposed to the elements (rain, moisture, etc.) and also respond to/in the dark (illuminated or otherwise).

The exact locations of projects will be determined upon receipt of all proposals in order to provide the most suitable match of site to project. Examples of past sites can be found within the event images at the end of this document. Images of past installations can be found on the DesCours website at [www.descours.us](http://www.descours.us).

Project selection will be done through a two-part process to identify the best pairings of potential projects to sites. First, the proposals are reviewed by the DesCours committee and past DesCours participants to make the first selection round. Second, the final participants are determined by founder and curator, Melissa Urcan. Determination is largely based upon the selection criteria outlined in this proposal on page 3, but also on overall quality and concept of the proposal and fit to the DesCours event.

We are asking all potential participants to submit a proposal that will assist in the site selection, and provide information and images for PR purposes. Please review the 'Criteria to Consider' section of this RFP closely before submitting your proposal.

Submission requirements are listed on the following page. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to send inquiries to [descours@aianeworleans.org](mailto:descours@aianeworleans.org).

## Submittal Requirements

All architects, artists and/or teams responding to the RFP must submit complete responses to the information requested and must note any exceptions to any information required by the RFP. Applicants shall present information in a clear and concise manner following the format listed below:

A. Proposal to include the following:

1. Concept. Describe your overall concept.

Explain the proposed process, medium and method. If your piece is interactive, please explain how. Identify where you think the work will best fit, outdoors, indoors, courtyard, lobby or otherwise. Please ensure that you have addressed the conditions (public, outdoors or indoors, etc.) in the concept. Proposals that directly react and respond to both site and audience will have first consideration. While not a requirement, pieces that are interactive in some means (be it through advanced technologies and materials, or a direct physical interaction) will be given priority during the reviewing process. The work should engage both the site and viewer – the opposite of a static sculpture or ‘plop art’.

2. Specifications. Please include all specifics about your piece, including but not limited to the following:

- How much space will be needed for your work, (both the actual installation and area around it);
- How much time is required for fabrication, installation and deinstallation;
- If electricity is needed, and at what level; monitoring/maintenance of the piece and how this will be managed (will you be staying to ensure it is working, if not, who is and how is this arrangement handled?);
- If technology/electronic components are involved, please specify how this will be addressed (if computers are involved, are you bringing your own and how will it be stored/protected?);
- How is piece secured to the ground and/or walls/ceiling? (it is important to note that most locations will not allow for any permanent securing into the ground or walls, thus most installations need to be self-supporting structures and your specifications should support this).
- How is piece protected from wind and rain elements?

3. Illustrations/photos. Additional visual support material and/or illustrations to show the proposal.

4. Schedule. Please include a brief timeline schedule that includes any fabrication and/or shipping of materials. Include your approximate installation and deinstallation time requirements. As we generally hope and expect for the projects to be maintained and monitored by the participants, please include the participants travel schedules.

5. Proposed Budget. Projects will be awarded budgets between \$500.00 and \$4000.00. This amount is intended to cover all costs for the installation, including materials, shipping, travel, installation and de-installation. We need to ensure that your proposed budget is feasible for your project. It is imperative that installation and de-installation, as well as maintenance during the exhibition are considered in your budget proposal. If your budget exceeds the limits above,

please include how you will cover the additional costs. **The majority of awards fall within the \$1000 - \$2500 range.** All travel costs that you hope to be reimbursed, including hotel, flight, rental car, etc. should be considered when creating your budget. (Important note – for budgeting hotel room stays, we have an excellent, centrally located partner hotel, the Astor Crowne Royal, that is providing our participants with special discounted rooms at \$40 a night including taxes. Please use this nightly amount when budgeting for your hotel stays. We will not reimburse hotel expenses that occur outside of the Astor Crowne Royal.)

B. Statement of Qualifications to Include the Following:

1. Bio. Information on the architect, artist or team, including a brief resume.
2. References. Three professional references (particularly include completed public art projects or work with public art programs). Name, relationship and contact information (phone number and email) are sufficient. Letters including actual work or installation experience are valuable.

**Criteria to Consider**

Please consider the following criteria of the project when creating your proposals.

a) **Functionality and Durability.** These are PUBLIC projects. This event is open and free to the public. Thus, a clear understanding of the public's impact on your proposal, both through wear, use, touching, climbing, damage potential, theft and repair-ability should be considered.

b) **Weather Conditions.** The installation and components should be designed to withstand outdoor conditions; including cold weather and/or rainy climate (heavy rains should be considered). If electronic elements are involved, please include technical specifications for how it will perform in the rain if necessary. If your project will not work in the outdoors, you must specify that your work requires a covered, interior site.

c) **Time of Year.** This relates to both the weather (it will likely rain at least one night and it can also snow in New Orleans –rare but possible) and the lower sunlight conditions. We have had two prior projects that relied on solar power to function that failed to work for most public exhibition nights. If you are going to include solar power in your design, you **MUST** have a back up option for the piece to work. The time of year has proven difficult for even the most robust solar powered equipment.

c) **Installation Restrictions.** As most of these sites are historic, you will not be able to drill, nail, or otherwise permanently secure the installations. Thus, you will need to ensure that the proposal specifies a self-supporting structure. If it is not self-supporting, please be very specific for how you intend to mount and secure your work.

d) **Appropriateness to the Site Location.** These installations are open to the general public, and located in historic locations that require a 'light touch' for installation. Drilling, painting, modifying the historic fabric will not be allowed.

e) **Nighttime Exhibition Hours.** All of the installations will be seen at night, from 6pm – 10pm nightly – and most will not be viewed by the public during the day. Lighting needs to be considered and addressed in the proposals. This should be included in the proposal specifications as listed above.

f) **Content/Concept.** As public piece, content should be appropriate for all ages, and should be accessible to a diverse audience.

### **Proposal Format**

Proposals are to be submitted as a PDF file. PDF files should be under 8MB in size.

Proposals are to be emailed to [descours@aianeworleans.org](mailto:descours@aianeworleans.org). If your files exceed 8MB, please ensure you contact the offices before the due date to make special arrangements.

Proposals will be reviewed by August 19, 2011. Projects that are selected to move onto the second phase may be required to submit a separate set of documents to further determine feasibility and most suitable location. This requirement is dependant on the extent of details provided in the initial proposal, and may not be required for all submissions. It is important that all submissions include as much information and details as possible. Final determinations will be made by the last week of August 2011.

### **Proposals Due – August 12, 2011 no later than 5:00 pm.**

#### **New Orleans DesCours - Summary**

New Orleans fourth annual, free, week-long architecture, visual arts, and entertainment festival

- DATES:** December 2-11, 2011. VIP Opening on December 1.
- TIMES:** Open 6pm – 10pm nightly.
- LOCATION:** New Orleans courtyards, rooftops, walkways, and building lobbies within the French Quarter and historic Central Business District.
- FEATURES:** Architecture, visual art and cultural entertainment – 11 sites, 11 bands, 4 parties, 50 blocks.
- ATTENDANCE:** Projected attendance is estimated between 12,000 and 16,000 people over the course of the event. This figure is based on 2007-2010 DesCours attendance numbers, and includes expected growth figures due to increased marketing and awareness efforts.
- PRESENTED BY:** AIA New Orleans, a 501 (c) 6 not-for-profit corporation, in partnership with the City of New Orleans, the Downtown Development District (DDD), the Vieux Carré Commission (VCC) and numerous civic and private organizations and entities.
- COST:** FREE to the public.

**For past project description examples, images, the 2010 Guide for download, and more, please visit the DesCours website at [www.descours.us](http://www.descours.us).**

## Images of Past Sites

These images provide a general overview of potential sites to assist in developing proposals. These images are intended to provide a visual for the basic set of conditions and constraints for the sites. While images may be used in proposals, we are not seeking or requiring proposals to respond to a specific site. The images below represent a sampling of potential sites, and not the 2011 DesCours sites.

