

Jury Notes from the 2013 Public Art Network Preconference Presentation

I am Norie Sato, and am so pleased to be here. Pittsburgh was my first home after emigrating from Japan as a kindergardener which makes being here a special privilege...In fact I just became a citizen of the US!

Although we had not met before working as jurors, we felt our outlook was compatible, we had some very good discussions, great consideration of each project and though we had different points of view about projects, in the end, we all agreed on the final 50 selections.

Overall quality of the submissions was high which bode well for the field. Many great projects were not able to be selected by the limitations of number and perhaps even a different 50 may have been selected by other jurors. Our various personalities, experiences played an undeniable role in our selections. It was not what you would call an objective, quantifiable selection.

After we looked through the over 350 projects we got a feeling for what had happened in the field this past year and we did notice some trends we thought interesting to bring up.

General Trends we noticed:

- Projects using Light/technology increased a lot
- Variety of funding models beyond the percent programs were increasing
- Group projects: 2 types

- Sites where similar modes were addressed by different artists
- “group” projects where groups of artists were working under a single site, somewhat like an exhibition
- Fewer projects seemed to address the larger site and environmental/land types of works
- The field is getting broader and encompassing many types of projects and models that occur in our public spaces, private or public, exhibition-type, artist-initiated, temporary/temporal,

Criteria: Things we considered when making our selections:

3 Main ones

- **artistic/aesthetic excellence**
- **innovation/originality**
- **appropriateness to context**

But as we reviewed, we couldn't help but think more with a finer brush about how projects:

- made a difference in the community in some way
- went beyond what is usual, even with traditional forms or materials
- aspired high
- used a fresh approach
- Showed Artistic growth by the artist
- operated on several levels vs. one-liner type of work
- just caught our fancy

We tended to shy away from:

- the same type of work by an artist that has been recognized before by YiR
- work that was an afterthought to the site or architecture
- Amount of budget did not sway our thinking. We selected small and large projects

Categories

We categorized the selected projects into **5 categories** developed after we selected the work to help us organize the presentation and to give emphasis to one aspect or another of a project.

However, some projects do not fit neatly into just one category. Many projects were more layered and operated on several levels. In that case, we chose to categorize them in what we considered their strongest aspect. We couched our categories in terms such as “honoring”, respecting, which echoed our feelings and attitudes about how public art lives in the world:

- 1) It's about honoring the community
- 2) Honoring the environment/celebrating the planet
- 3) Honoring the materials and celebrating craftsmanship
- 4) Respecting and enhancing site
- 5) Changing our perceptions of what was-history/memory

We'll talk about the categories a little more as we present the projects.

The three of us will present by category, with John going first with the “it’s about the community” category

Conclusions:

Many good projects were not shown here and it would be great to be able to share more of them with the entire group in some way

We tried to pay attention to subtle projects as well as “loud” ones

There seems to be a broadening of the types of artwork included within the public art consideration which I feel shows a certain maturation of the field and success in our endeavors as a field. PAN and YiR is becoming more known beyond the usual suspects.

In future submissions, we recommend:

- Good Photography is important and should describe the artwork so the jurors can really get a sense of it
- Although we recognize that process is important to making public art, don’t waste limited number of images on installation or fabrication shots --we prefer to see the final results
- Shots with people are also helpful
- Don’t submit video unless it truly adds to the understanding of the project beyond what the 6 images show
- Quotes used within the description go beyond just the laudatory
- We are unsure how group projects are best portrayed...either within the group or as separate projects. If this continues as a trend, perhaps we

should allow at least one image per artist to really show the range of the project.

We want to leave you with some questions to think and discuss during the conference about for future Year in Review recognitions:

- 1) How should Group projects be best submitted and considered? Is it a trend or an anomaly, and if the projects are submitted as a group, should each artist within the project be required to submit at least one image? Should group projects be submitted as a group or individually e each artist
- 2) International Projects: This year we had very few, but should we encourage more submissions? How should they be treated, as a separate group or integrated into the whole?
- 3) How or even should projects not selected be seen?
- 4) Should the final 50 be further “ranked”? Should there be a “best of the year” or some type of “people’s choice” selection? How would that voting work?
- 5) Should there be awards rather than just a recognition as they are now?

Congratulations to those recognized artists, collaborating designers, agencies, funders, and plethora of people involved in partnership to make these projects happen,

Special thanks to Liesel, Katie Dubbs (intern) for their work on this project (whomever else??)

And a big round of applause for the entire body of public art completed within 2012.