



AMERICANS
for the ARTS

SERVING COMMUNITIES.
ENRICHING LIVES.

What Is a Public Art Program?

Public art programs are charged with administering the development and management of public art in their communities. The methods used to build and sustain a public art program include—but are not limited to—commissioning or purchasing artwork for permanent or temporary display, placing artists on project design teams, and creating artist-in-residence opportunities.

In addition to creating new work, public art programs often are charged with maintaining their public art collection; developing educational programming; creating public art resources, including printed materials and websites; seeking out partnerships and opportunities with public and private organizations; and acting as a source for public art information.

Public Art: An Essential Component of Creating Communities

By Jack Becker

Introduction

Public art is a multifaceted field of inquiry; it encompasses a wide variety of creative expressions in the public realm. From memorials and historical monuments to contemporary installations and performance events, the possibilities are endless. Each public art program's intention varies; definitions and generalizations are not commonly held. Some communities see public art as a way of enhancing or personalizing otherwise impersonal spaces. Others view it as a means to activate civic dialogue or provide a vehicle for the community to express its identity. Achieving success with a public art program is challenging, to say the least, and there are numerous cautionary tales.

This Monograph offers an overview of the field for people new to public art, from elected officials and community members to artists and arts administrators. On the occasion of the first-ever survey of the field conducted by the Public Art Network of Americans for the Arts, it is appropriate to ask some large questions. What constitutes the public art field today? Why is public art beneficial to a community? What are the critical issues in the field? Beyond these important discussions, this document includes highlights from the survey.

Number and Type of Public Art Programs

Today, there are more than 350 public art programs that support thousands of artists' projects in airports, train stations, libraries, parks, streetscapes, government buildings, and neighborhoods—urban, suburban, and rural. The majority of public art programs (81 percent) are housed within a public agency—an office of cultural affairs, arts commission, or some other operating department. Most programs involve volunteer commissioners and committee members in addition to a significant amount of staff time. Many programs also contract with outside vendors, such as planning consultants, conservators, public relations specialists, Web designers, writers, researchers, and photographers. Some programs have begun to hire artists to serve on design teams and participate in city planning or use artist-in-residence strategies to engage communities in the process.



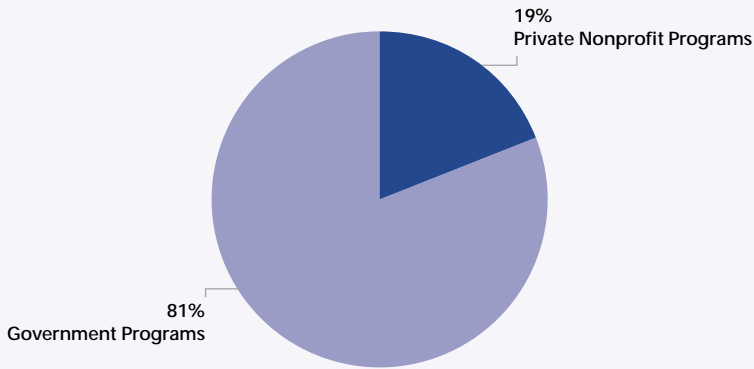
Adams Street Bridge, Longfellow Creek Habitat Improvement Project, Lorna Jordan, artist. Photo courtesy of City of Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs.

In October 2003, the Public Art Network released the first comprehensive, national survey of public art programs in the United States. The survey studied budgets, funding sources, program administration, and how programs work with artists. The resulting survey report, *Public Art Programs Fiscal Year 2001: A Detailed Statistical Report on the Nation's Public Art Programs*, is the source for the public art program information found in this Monograph. A copy can be ordered from the Americans for the Arts bookstore at www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

A majority of programs either commission or purchase permanent works of art, such as sculptures, murals, mosaics, decorative features, or functional elements. These are typically viewed as enhancements, contributing to public improvement or civic construction projects. Leading programs, such as that of Seattle's Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs, have sought strategies to offer more diverse public programming and artist services, including exhibitions; educational workshops; slide registries; and sophisticated, interactive websites.

Private nonprofit organizations, such as the Tucson Pima (AZ) Arts Council and the Regional Arts and Culture Council in Portland, OR, also operate public art programs as part of a larger set of programs and services. A select few, such as Creative Time and the Public Art Fund in New York City, operate independently. The flexibility of these programs usually results in a greater diversity of activities, from emerging artist programs and temporary installations to community events and educational offerings.

Legal Status of Public Art Programs



Public art can also be found in urban and rural sculpture parks, often managed by museums or arts organizations. Many colleges and universities have art-on-campus programs, such as Iowa State University and the University of Minnesota. And in many communities, public art is supported by private corporations, religious organizations, and individual donors.

There are also independent artists who work outside the systems described above, including many folk artists as well as internationally renowned artists like Christo and Jeanne-Claude. Minneapolis photographer Wing Young Huie produced his monumentally scaled, summer-long *Lake Street USA* as an independent artist in 2001, encompassing a five-mile corridor of storefront windows, bus stops, and boarded window coverings. In addition to grants, proceeds from the eventual auction of his 600+ photographs helped to defray his expenses.

Artist with one of more than 600 images from *Lake Street USA*, Wing Young Huie, artist. Photo courtesy of FORECAST Public Artworks.

Survey Highlights: Conservation

According to the responding programs, commissioned permanent projects represent one half (49 percent) of the nation's completed public art projects. Purchases of existing artwork (14 percent) and commissioned temporary projects (9 percent) are the next largest categories of public art projects. Only 8 percent of the nation's public art projects are conservation projects. This finding may reflect the fact that many policies and ordinances address the creation of new artworks, but lack appropriate attention to the conservation and preservation of existing public art.



Funding and Growth of Public Art Programs

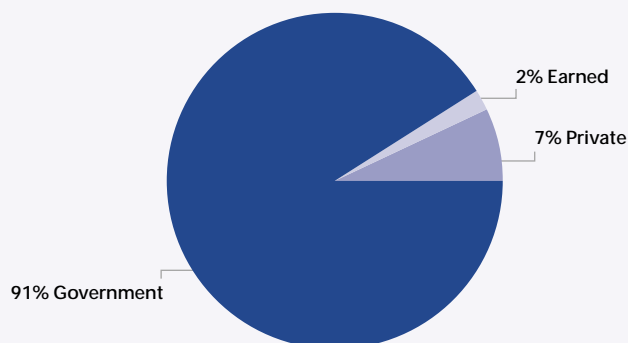
The amount of public art in the United States has grown over the past decade, fueled largely by the growth of commissioning programs run by city, county, and state governments. The average budget of the nation’s public art programs grew 27.4 percent to \$779,968 during 2001. In fact, the average public art budget nearly doubled between 1998 and 2001, increasing an average of 23.5 percent annually. In comparison, the total operating budgets of the umbrella organizations that operate public art programs grew an average of only 8.6 percent annually during the same period. Estimated spending on public art in 2003 is \$150 million.

Most public art programs are funded by a “percent-for-art” strategy—first used in Philadelphia in 1959—in which a small portion of capital improvement funds are allocated for acquiring or commissioning artwork. Beyond the typical “percent-for-art” model, there are a variety of funding mechanisms employed to support public art. These include annual appropriation, departmental allocation, hotel/motel tax,

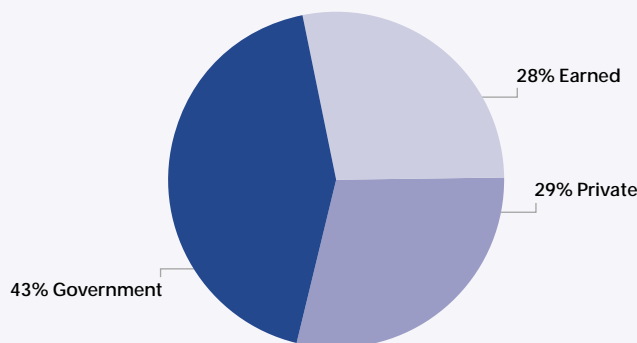
sales tax, tax increment financing, development fees, foundation grants or private gifts, corporate sponsorship, benefit auctions, and fundraising events. Monuments and memorials are usually funded through a combination of public and private sources.

Most federally funded public art is handled through the General Services Administration. The National Endowment for the Arts’ Art in Public Places Program began in the mid-1970s and continued for over two decades. The nationwide CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act) program of the late 1970s put hundreds of artists to work in their communities, on a scale similar to the WPA programs of the 1930s. Today we see federal support for public art through such programs as the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) and Art & Community Landscapes, a partnership of the National Park Service, the New England Foundation for the Arts, and the NEA. Public art initiatives can also be found within state departments of transportation, neighborhood revitalization programs, and community development corporations.

Revenue Sources: Government Programs



Revenue Sources: Private Programs



Defining Public Art

A definition of public art is essential to establish ordinances, develop permits, and educate broad audiences. However, as the field grows and evolves at a rapid pace, developing a fixed definition is very difficult. The intention and the desired outcomes of each program vary. For most public agencies, public art may be defined as “work created by artists for places accessible to and used by the public,” but the variety of public art encompasses a much broader spectrum of activities and approaches.

It is important to distinguish between public art, which takes into account its site and other contextual issues, and art in public places. Simply placing a sculpture on a street corner is not the same as designing a sculpture specifically for that site by considering its audience, environmental conditions, the history of the site, etc. Regardless, art placed in public can still be quality art and offer the general public an art experience outside a museum or gallery setting.

As more artists have entered the public arena, their art has taken many forms. The field today encompasses place-making, environmental activism, cause-related art, sound installations, interdisciplinary performance events, community-based initiatives, and much more. Indeed, public art is a multifaceted field, open to artists of all stripes, without predetermined rules or a mutually agreed upon critical language. This open-endedness can be a liability for public agencies seeking to serve a diverse community. Artists may view it as an asset, however, liberating them from the constraints imposed by the commercial marketplace.

Survey Highlights: Public Art Ordinances

A public art ordinance is the legislation establishing a public art program within a unit of government. Generally, a public art ordinance establishes the financial mechanism that funds the public art program, identifies the unit of government or private contractor that will manage the public art program, and establishes a basis for the development of public art policies and/or guidelines.

Three quarters of the programs that responded to the survey report that they operate with an active public art ordinance. A few ordinances serve only to establish the public art program (13.7 percent), while most also allocate funding (86.3 percent).

Among those that allocate funding:

- 91 percent mandate the allocations (the rest are voluntary funds);
- 41 percent allocate funds for conservation;
- 29 percent allocate funds for program staff; and
- 21 percent allocate funds for educational programming.

Interestingly, public art programs that operate with a public art ordinance tend to have significantly larger and faster-growing budgets than those without an ordinance. This is not surprising since by definition, most ordinances create a consistent and reliable funding stream for public art.

The process of creating public art necessarily involves interaction among many interests; it is a cooperative, somewhat theaterlike production with many individuals playing a part in creating a common goal. As people of different perspectives and positions seek to make decisions cooperatively, the result can be dynamic, inviting, engaging, and sometimes contentious.

Likewise, the experience of viewing public art is dynamic. The relationship between the work and its site, its audience, and other contextual factors all contribute to its impact. Successful public art evokes meaning in the public realm while retaining a high artistic quality. Perhaps most exciting is the fact that the field is evolving to include different art forms, traditions, and perspectives.



Why Is Public Art Important

Imagine, if you can, a world devoid of public art: no *Statue of Liberty*, no *Eiffel Tower*, no *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*, no *Tribute in Light*. No murals, memorials, or monuments. What would life be like without fireworks displays, puppet parades, sculpture parks, and visionary roadside folk art? These landmarks and special events enhance our experience of a place and our quality of life. They engender a sense of pride and community identity. They reach audiences outside museums, galleries, and theaters, and they add to the beauty of everyday life. They declare the worth of a place and a time in our shared culture.

How important is the design of our shared public realm? What is the value of a park or plaza, or of a free exchange in a welcoming environment? Public art projects offer us a way to participate in the planning, design, and creation of communal space. For this reason, many refer to public art as a democratic art form. And while democracy can be a messy process, public art is an integral part of the fabric of American culture.

Public art does many things, most of which can be divided into four areas. It can:

- engage civic dialogue and community;
- attract attention and economic benefit;
- connect artists with communities; and
- enhance public appreciation of art.

Tribute in Light Initiative: John Bennett, Gustavo Bonevardi, Richard Nash Gould, Julian Laverdiere, Paul Marantz, Paul Myoda. Produced by The Municipal Art Society and Creative Time, with support from the Battery Park City Authority. Photo: www.charliesamuels.com.



Project Row Houses, Rick Lowe, artist. *We Are The People*, Sam Durant, artist. Photo courtesy of *Project Row Houses*.

Engage Civic Dialogue and Community

During the mid-1990s, in a run-down row of shotgun houses in Houston, artist Rick Lowe saw an opportunity to return life and vitality to an endangered part of that city's African-American history. *Project Row Houses*, a public art effort involving numerous public and private entities, demonstrated successful community building. In addition to artists in residence, the area around the restored homes featured events and festivals, renewing residents' faith in the power of civic dialogue.

In addition to grand monuments like the *Gateway Arch* or *Mount Rushmore*, which foster pride and contribute to our cultural heritage, strategically executed public art can raise awareness of issues such as racism, gang violence, and environmental degradation. The *AIDS Memorial Quilt*, featuring over 70,000 individual quilts, has been displayed on the National Mall in Washington, DC. Beyond the spectacle of a colorful, monumental folk art installation, the quilt raises awareness of the AIDS epidemic, generates significant media attention, and leverages increased support for research and education.

"[Public art] adds vitality, and it adds liveliness. It's important because it's an amenity you can add to a building. It's a way of showing tenants that you care about the public space and that you want to give back to the building."

— Developer Michael Staenberg
THF Realty, Overland, MO

"Public artworks can be more than objects in space—they can be ideas, places, and actions. They can reveal the dynamics of ecological and social processes, tap into imaginations, and create a sense of place. I think of my artworks as theaters that regenerate the environment while triggering internal emotions and narratives."

— Lorna Jordan, environmental artist

"The incorporation of art in our public space helps give expression to our community values. When we encourage art, we also encourage creativity and thoughtfulness."

— Mayor Kevin Foy, Chapel Hill, NC

Attract Attention and Economic Benefit

Providence, RI, experienced a revitalization of its downtown due in part to *WaterFire Providence*, a public art event conceived in 1995 by artist Barnaby Evans. While the concept is simple—burning fires in the middle of a restored river channel through downtown, accompanied by original musical compositions from artists around the world—it draws thousands of people several times each year, stimulating the economy and creating pride.

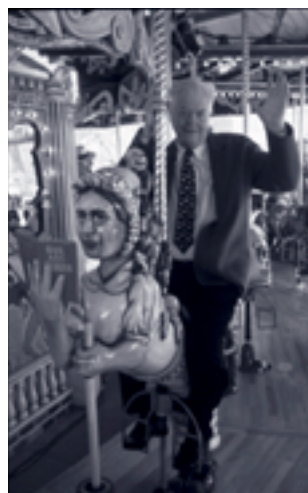
Thanks to Kathleen Farrell and a handful of other artists, Joliet, IL, became a mural capital, attracting positive media attention, tour groups, and increased community support for the arts. Many of the murals relate to Joliet's colorful history and connect with the city's Heritage Walk.

Significant funds and attention have been generated by such projects as *Cows on Parade* in Chicago and *Art on the Street* in Cedar Rapids, IA, supporting a wide variety of causes. Public art can help visitors navigate a city and can generate cultural tourism. The economic benefits of public art also include the many businesses contributing to the field, such as design, fabrication, engineering, lighting, insurance, and installation. Indeed, public art services are a growth industry in communities such as Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Phoenix, and San Francisco.

Connect Artists with Communities

Public art can assume many forms. It is malleable, able to meet the needs of different communities and contribute to many types of projects, from city planning or a river cleanup to a memorial for a lost hero. Artists bring creative perspectives to the strategies and management of such projects, and their efforts often improve the end result.

As an audience development tool, public art provides unparalleled access to the arts. Street-painting festivals, such as the Italian Street



The artist riding the figure Charlotte Robinson from Red Grooms' *Tennessee Foxtrot Carousel*, Copyright Red Grooms, artist. Photo by Gary Layda.

Painting Festival held annually in San Rafael, CA, encourage audiences to watch as artists create temporary masterpieces in chalk on the street. The May Day Parade in Minneapolis, hosted by Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, features community art-making workshops that invite hundreds of neighborhood residents to create their own contribution to a celebratory festival that draws an audience of 50,000 annually.

Enhance Public Appreciation of Art

Public art can inspire awe, draw out deep emotions, make us smile, engage young people, and refresh our perspective. Sometimes, appreciation of public art is found in the details, the fine craftsmanship, and the sheer artistry. Red Grooms' *Tennessee Foxtrot Carousel* in Nashville, TN, features a rideable Davy Crockett, Kitty Wells, Chet Atkins, a big catfish, and many more colorful characters from the region's musical legacy. It's fun, it's educational, and it oozes creativity.

Artists can deliver messages—unfiltered by galleries, agents, or the media—to targeted audiences. In fact, every site comes with an audience. Creative expressions can be directed to businesspeople downtown; children at a playground; seniors at a community center;

or farmers at a grain elevator, such as Tacoumba Aiken's giant mural in Good Thunder, MN. Public art can teach us about the diverse cultures inhabiting our community, and invite us to consider the role of art and artists in our society.

Great public art reveals its meaning over time, rewarding repeated visits. Beyond all that, public art has the distinct ability to add beauty to our shared environment; to commemorate, memorialize, and celebrate; and to transport us, if only momentarily, out of our daily routine. Public art is for everyone and it is free. Many people don't visit museums or attend the theater; anybody can experience public art.

Critical Issues

Given the complexities of developing and managing public art programs, working as a professional in the field, and connecting public art with a broad and diverse audience, critical issues abound. Discussing complex topics such as selection processes, funding, conservation, contracts, copyright, and insurance could fill a book; many of these issues will be dealt with in subsequent Public Art Network publications and on its website. What follows is intended to illuminate a select number of critical

Survey Highlights: Working with Artists

- The 102 public art programs that provided information on the number of artists they have commissioned report that they have commissioned an average of 79.5 artists since the inception of their program.
- According to responding programs, the most common method used by artists to apply for a public art commission is an open call (86 percent). Of the open calls that are circulated, 72 percent of the programs issue requests for qualifications and 68 percent issue requests for proposals. Nearly one half (46 percent) report that artists apply for commissions by invitation or nomination. Fewer public art programs report that artists typically apply by joining a slide registry (30 percent). Fifteen percent of programs use all three methods to commission artists. The least common method used by artists to apply for commissions is proposing projects directly to the program (15 percent).
- The vast majority (83 percent) of public art programs report that they pay artists for their proposals when they are finalists for a project.
- According to both government and private nonprofit programs, artist selection panels tend to include the representation of architects, artists, arts professionals, business leaders, and community members, as well as representatives from the commissioning agency and the public art program. In general, artist selection panels consist of an average of 8.6 people.

issues facing contemporary public art production and administration, and offer possible solutions or methods for addressing them.

Education and Incubation

How do artists gain experience in the field of public art? If you have never had a commission, how are you going to get one? The Public Art Network's field survey found that less than one half of the responding public art programs provide educational and/or training opportunities for artists. Programs that do offer training are likely to offer open meetings and lecturers. Far fewer programs offer mentoring or provide resources for public art educators. Only nine of the responding programs report that they have a mentorship program for artists.

American educational institutions are just beginning to recognize the importance of public art and design. These are challenging yet teachable subjects, but few schools have developed curricula. A handful, like the University of Southern California and the University of Washington, offer public art courses or degree programs for artists or administrators seeking to enter the field.

From preschool through college and beyond, we can learn something *from* public art, and we can also learn *about* public art: how to get started; find support; negotiate with site owners; deal with bureaucracies; and, most importantly, make a living at it. More educational tools are needed. Books, journals, and slide shows are helpful, but first-hand experience is essential. To gain this, visit an artist's studio, attend a community meeting, and listen to the stories that each project has to tell and the lessons learned.

For artists new to public art, only a few grant programs exist that fund artist-initiated projects. Often, artists need to have experience in public art in order to gain commissions. The lack of opportunities for artists to receive funding for their own public art initiatives makes it challenging for them to receive that breakthrough project from a commissioning organization.

FORECAST Public Artworks, a 25-year-old nonprofit in St. Paul, MN, established a statewide funding program in 1989 for independent artists of all disciplines, offering support for research and development and for small-scale "demonstration" projects. FORECAST's national journal, *Public Art Review*, has served as a valuable educational



I have a story to tell you... (2003)
Pepón Osorio, artist. Photo by
Gregory Benson, courtesy of the
Fairmount Park Art Association.

tool since 1989, with many instructors, students, schools, and libraries as subscribers. Apprenticeships and internships are also effective ways to gain hands-on experience with artists and program administrators.

Diversity

Public art reflects the changing demographics of our society, but it could do even more. Creating opportunities for diverse and immigrant populations to participate in public art will strengthen the overall fabric of our culture and inform audiences about the creative impulse found in all cultures.

Unlike the traditional world of art museums, diverse artists now figure prominently in the public art field, including such visionaries as Maya Lin, Suzanne Lacy, Mel Chin, Pepón Osorio, and Rick Lowe. These and countless other artists have championed public art as a humanizing force; strengthened our connections to the natural world and to each other; and created a means of communicating ideas and sharing experiences in a changing, culturally diverse world.

Philadelphia's Latino community, for example, recently celebrated the installation of internationally renowned artist Pepón Osorio's *I have a story to tell you...*, a set of large-scale photographic images in the newly renovated headquarters of Congreso de Latinos Unidos. The installation was commissioned by the Fairmount Park Art Association as part of their groundbreaking New-Land-Marks program. The windows of the main building and the adjacent, more intimate *casita* (little house) are fabricated with photographic images on glass. To create this community photograph album, Osorio collected photographs from community members, seeking images that reflect shared experience and depict local events that have impacted community life. Beyond its

empowering attributes for the Latino community, Osorio's project offers the community at large a glimpse at a growing population and with it a sense of their culture and their values.

Critical Language

Shared vocabulary in the public art field urgently needs development. Not everybody is on the same page. Each of us brings a different perspective and a distinct set of criteria when deciding what makes good public art. Can the field develop critical language through shared sets of evaluation criteria?

Few public art programs currently conduct evaluations. Only 27 percent of the programs responding to the field survey stated that they had conducted an evaluation or assessment of an individual public art project; 22 percent had conducted an evaluation or assessment of their entire program. It is interesting to note that the survey found that programs that have completed an evaluation of their entire program have much larger and more aggressively growing budgets than those that have not.

Public art programs can develop their evaluation methods by gathering information from local and national grantmaking organizations about evaluation processes, working with an evaluation consultant, and learning about the evaluations conducted by other public art programs. Reporting back to the field about the evaluation mechanism and results via the Public Art Network, websites, conferences, listservs, and articles is an essential step toward advancing awareness of the need and benefits of evaluation.

Critical writing and analysis on public art is scarce, but it is a skill that needs to be fostered among the many talented writers in the United States. Beyond art critics, who tend to be more interested in aesthetics or art historical concerns, investigative journalists, social critics,

anthropologists, social workers, and the articulate layperson should all be encouraged to write and talk publicly about public art more often.

Public artists and program administrators, both of whom have the greatest involvement and familiarity with the field, need to gain more objective critical writing skills to effectively share their experiences with public art's larger audience. Public art programs and their parent agencies should consider partnering with foundations and the media to support fellowships for writers and commentators. Newspapers undoubtedly could do a better job covering what's important about public art; many regard it merely as a photo opportunity or a human interest story.

Every project has a story to tell, making film and video and the Internet effective tools for talking about public art. The complex process, the many talented artists, and the wide range of projects can be edited and organized for a broad audience. We can walk around a sculpture, observe it during different seasons, hear the comments of those passing by, and go behind the scenes.

Television programs such as PBS's *Art 21* and segments occasionally aired on *CBS Sunday Morning* are good examples of ways to explore contemporary art and artists, as they are accessible to a broad audience and they don't "talk down" to viewers. Noteworthy films include *Running Fence*, documenting Christo and Jeanne-Claude's struggle to install a 22-mile fabric sculpture in California. More recent documentaries include the Academy Award-winning *A Strong Clear Vision* about Maya Lin's experience creating the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* and other projects, and the 2003 documentary *Rivers and Tides* about artist Andy Goldsworthy and his persistent struggle to create meticulous, fragile, and ephemeral—and stunningly beautiful—outdoor works of art.

These and other records are tremendous resources that begin to break down the language barriers between public art and its many audiences.

Controversy

Public art can become a lightning rod, especially in complex capital projects, because it is often the only area where public participation is invited. Public art can also attract controversy because it uses public funds and occupies a prominent place in public spaces. The meaning of great public art is often not grasped immediately upon installation; consider the *Eiffel Tower*, the *Gateway Arch*, the *Statue of Liberty*, and the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial*—all controversial. It wasn't until years—or even decades—later that these projects became valued icons, able to withstand the test of time. It isn't hard to offend someone with nudity, political incorrectness, social commentary, the perceived unnecessary use of public funds, etc. And sometimes public art simply doesn't work. Let's face it, there's plenty of mediocre art out there, making it difficult to build a case for future support.

Controversy is a magnet for the media, and there are plenty of examples. Dennis Oppenheim's *Blue Shirt* project for Milwaukee's General Mitchell International Airport faced overwhelming opposition after the design was approved by the county's art committee in 2000. The monumentally scaled wall-mounted sculpture of a blue work shirt was the subject of a legal dispute, based on the fact that the artist did not complete installation on time. Oppenheim said the problems with the piece were not about timing or money, but about politics. The city government and local press mounted a campaign against the sculpture, characterizing it as a pejorative comment on Milwaukee's reputation as a blue-collar town.

Survey Highlights: Visual Artist Rights Act

The Visual Artist Rights Act of 1990 (VARA) is Section 106A of the copyright law. It applies to any work created after 1990. VARA establishes a definition of visual art, which includes sculpture. VARA provides protection beyond the economic rights of the copyright law, and is distinct from ownership of a copy of an artwork or of a copyright or any exclusive right under copyright to that artwork.

VARA is personal to the artist, its protection is for the life of the artist, and an artist's VARA rights cannot be transferred. VARA provides for the artist's *right of attribution* to claim authorship of his or her work; to prevent the use of his or her name on any work he or she did not create; and to have his or her name removed from any work that is distorted, mutilated, or modified that would reflect with prejudice on the artist's reputation.

VARA provides for the artist's *right of integrity* to prevent any intentional distortion, alteration, or destruction of a work of recognized stature, and any intentional or grossly negligent destruction of a work in violation of that right. The artist can waive his or her VARA rights, but a waiver has to be in writing and must specifically identify the artwork and the uses of that artwork. The waiver applies only to the artwork and uses so identified.

Eighty-eight percent of responding public art programs report that their artist contract complies with VARA. Similarly, 90 percent of public art programs say that the artists that they commission retain the copyright of their work. When the copyright is not maintained by the artists, most often it becomes the property of the public art program. A few programs report that they share a joint copyright with the artists.

Definition by William Gignilliat, Esq., PAN Council committee member.

The dispute kept the project on hold for months, until a revised installation was approved for completion.

Everyone's a critic. If you want to find fault with a public art project at any point in the process, you can. And, depending on the situation, there may be a need for "damage control." Obtaining written support from key community leaders and project stakeholders early on can help.

Strategic planning and obtaining early feedback helps avoid unwanted controversy. Play your own devil's advocate and determine the risks carefully, then move forward with assurance and conviction. If you consider the examples listed here—all considered great works of public art—controversy can be viewed as a good sign. Controversy and an abundance of attention indicate that people are interested, concerned, or even outraged. This begs the question: why? The root of this question is at the heart of what makes public art so compelling.

Conclusion

Communities that desire meaningful public art need to work at it by reaching out and participating in the effort. After all, the public is the final beneficiary of public art. As the demographics and the economics in our communities change, public art must constantly prove its value to the public.

Based on the significant number of programs, the size of their budgets, and the millions of people affected every day, public art appears to be gaining recognition. As public art infiltrates almost every facet of our culture, in myriad forms, it can help all the arts to regain a position of value and priority in our society. We must continue to support public artists; help them to give shape to our shared identity; and bring their visions, their energy, their spirit, and their creative solutions to the world. Shaping places—with landmarks and landscapes, events and ideologies—sets the stage for a critical part of our existence: our connection with our environment; with our past, present, and future; and with other human beings.

About the Author

Jack Becker is founder and artistic director of FORECAST Public Artworks, which produces an annual grant program for Minnesota artists, offers a wide variety of consulting services, and publishes the national journal *Public Art Review*.

About Public Art Network

PAN is a program of Americans for the Arts designed to provide services to the diverse field of public art and to develop strategies and tools to improve communities through public art. PAN's key constituents are public art professionals, visual artists, design professionals, arts organizations, and communities planning public art projects and programs. For more information about PAN, e-mail pan@artsusa.org or visit the website at www.AmericansForTheArts.org/PAN.

Resources

For more information on the artists, projects, and organizations in this Monograph, please see the following websites.

Artists and Projects

Art on the Street

www.downtowncr.org

Blue Shirt Project, Dennis Oppenheim, artist

www.home.earthlink.net/~dennisoppenheim

www.jsonline.com/news/metro/oct03/180260.asp

Mel Chin, artist

www.pbs.org/art21/artists/chin

Christo and Jeanne-Claude, artists

www.christojeanneclaude.net

Cows on Parade

www.ci.chi.il.us/Tourism/CowsOnParade/

Kathleen Farrell, artist

www.canalcor.org/Mural.html

I have a story to tell you..., Pepón Osorio, artist

www.fpa.org/whatsnew_ded.html

Italian Street Painting Festival

www.youthinarts.org/ispf.htm

Lake Street USA, Wing Young Huie, artist

<http://lakestreetusa.walkerart.org>

May Day Parade

www.heartofthebeasttheatre.org/mayday

Suzanne Lacy, artist

www.suzannelacy.com

Maya Lin

www.pbs.org/art21/artists/lin

PBS' Art 21

www.pbs.org/art21

Project Row Houses, Rick Lowe, artist

www.projectrowhouses.org

Rivers and Tides

www.roxie.com/rivers.html

Salmon Bone Bridge, Lorna Jordan, artist

www.cityofseattle.net/util/urban creeks/artNature.htm

A Strong Clear Vision

www.pbs.org/pov/pov1996/mayalin/

Tennessee Foxtrot Carousel, Red Grooms, artist

www.artsnashville.org/pubart/grooms_tenne.html

Tribute in Light

www.creativetime.org/towers

WaterFire Providence, Barnaby Evans, artist

www.waterfire.com

Programs and Organizations

Creative Time

www.creativetime.org

Art & Community Landscapes

www.nefa.org/grantprog/acl/index.html

FORECAST Public Artworks

www.forecastart.org

Iowa State University's Art-on-Campus Program

www.museums.iastate.edu/AOCFrames.htm

Public Art Fund

www.publicartfund.org

Regional Arts and Culture Council

www.racc.org

Seattle Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs

www.cityofseattle.net/arts

Tucson Pima Arts Council

www.tucsonpimaartscouncil.org

University of Minnesota's Public Art on Campus

www.umn.edu

University of Southern California's Public Art Studies Program

<http://finearts.usc.edu/pas>

University of Washington's Program on Public Art

www.studypublicart.org



AMERICANS
for the ARTS

Washington Office

1000 Vermont Avenue NW
6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
T 202.371.2830
F 202.371.0424

New York Office

One East 53rd Street
2nd Floor
New York, NY 10022
T 212.223.2787
F 212.980.4857

info@artsusa.org
www.AmericansForTheArts.org

Author

Jack Becker

Editors

Susan Gillespie
Anne L'Ecuyer
Renee Piechocki
Americans for the Arts

Copyright 2004, Americans for the Arts.
Printed in the United States.

This Monograph is generously supported by
THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

Did you know that as a member of Americans for the Arts you can receive the Monograph series by mail? Other membership benefits include access to peer networks and professional development, legislative alerts, monthly updates, research reports, and advocacy tools. Join the thousands of individuals and organizations committed to communicating the importance of the arts in our lives. Learn more about Americans for the Arts at www.AmericansForTheArts.org. For more information on membership, please contact Heather Rowe, director of professional membership, at 202.371.2830 or membership@artsusa.org.