

**Transcript of jurors' notes
from the Public Art Network Year in Review presentation
at The Americans for the Arts Conference in Nashville, TN 2014**

jurors: Cath Brunner, Ralph Helmick, Janet Zweig

Opening Remarks

Cath Brunner

Before we begin, we want to explain a bit about our process.

Although we were offered the alternative of working independently, each of us selecting our own list of projects totaling no more than 50, we chose to work as a jury – to debate, discuss, decide. Most importantly, to listen and learn from each other.

We want this presentation to be not only about the projects we selected as representing the best of 2013, but also insight into our conversations and analysis of the field – it's unfortunate trends and moments of brilliance and our hopes for how it might evolve. We are revealing our internal doubts, our own fierce advocacy and biases, our debate, discussion and decisions in the hope that we can start a conversation that extends beyond this presentation and acknowledgement for the projects that were chosen.

Qualities

Cath Brunner

As we made a choice about what constituted “the best” we were each searching for certain qualities. For me that was:

- originality,
- ambition and
- a meaningful connection to place.

Janet Zweig

For the qualities I was looking for, I asked these questions:

- Is the artwork successful in engaging the viewer? For example, does it surprise, provoke or open questions?
- Does the artwork contribute to the larger discourse around visual art, social practice, and/or art in the public realm?
- Is the work conceptually and aesthetically interesting, and are those two elements linked in the final result?

Ralph Helmick

I was looking for:

- Esthetic force and generosity
- Formal subtlety
- For me, site specificity wasn't a requirement

If a project was site specific, it must reflect that in way that wasn't crushingly literal.

Janet Zweig

How our presentation is structured

After much deliberation, we found 37 projects we agreed together to support from the 342 entries. We did not sort them into categories because the pieces we chose didn't fall into obvious categories. While looking at the larger pool, we did identify a lot of trends and themes, but we chose instead to reward originality and inventiveness over trends.

We collaborated so closely that we wanted to speak together as a team. One of us will take the lead on each project, and there will be some “point-counterpoint” discussion over a few of the projects. We hope this will give you a peek behind the curtain of how we grappled together with our decisions.

The projects will be presented in a random order, but sprinkled into that will be what Ralph named Love Letters and Wild Cards.

Ralph Helmick

Love Letters and Wild Cards

Out of 342 submissions 6 received yes votes from all three of us.

That's a statistic to ponder.

These 6 we have designated LOVE LETTERS.

Any deliberative process has strengths and weaknesses.

Unless you're careful, a voting structure can flatten things out.

To remedy this we allowed ourselves two WILD CARDS each.

Entries where was a project was, obviously, discussed, but consensus was neither required nor sought.

Thus a degree of idiosyncrasy was retained, a positive thing in Art.

1

Sans façon

Cacher pour mieux montrer (Hide to show better)

City of Saskatoon – Placemaker Program

\$15,000 temporary

“Cacher pour mieux montrer, “hide to show better”, is an expression of the French idea that partial concealment enhances attractiveness by suggesting rather than displaying.

For one month, existing public art pieces across the city were covered with industrial shrink-wrap, The pieces remained shrouded while their shape stayed strangely familiar through the new sculptural smooth tight surface.

Cacher pour mieux montrer’s provocative and playful nature invited citizens to experience temporarily what our public space is like without our familiar public art works, inviting questioning and intrigue about the presence and function of Public Art.

The individual sculptures temporarily hidden from sight were re-revealed in December to great fanfare.”

Janet Zweig

This piece's appeal sneaks up on you after you start to understand the many ways in which it resonates. It's a play on figurative vs. abstract, uniformity vs. variety, temporary vs. permanent. It takes objects in our urban landscape that are so familiar we don't bother looking at them and turns them suddenly unfamiliar and puzzling. Best of all, it's a meta-work about public art itself – it makes you either miss something permanent in the cityscape and long for its return, or it makes you understand why you might wish it would go away.

2

Brian W. Brush, Yong Ju Lee, Noa Younse

Filament Mind

Teton County Library, Jackson, WY

\$67,000 permanent

“Filament Mind is a human information-driven installation designed to visualize the collective curiosities and questions of Library visitors through a dynamic and interactive spatial sculpture.

Whenever a library patron anywhere in the state of Wyoming performs a computer search of the library catalog, Filament Mind illuminates that search in a flash of color and light through glowing bundles of fiber optic cables.

Each of the 1000 fiber optic cables hanging above (totaling over 5 miles of cable) corresponds to a call number in the Dewey Decimal System, which organizes the library's collection into approximately 1000 categories of knowledge.

These category titles are displayed in text on the lobby's south and north walls at the termination points of the fiber optic cables.

Just as libraries throughout history have inscribed the names and words of great minds into stone, Teton County Library visualizes the thoughts of all its visitors through a living, visual archive of their questions.

Filament Mind can be seen as the mind of the library and, by extension, the mind of the community.

Experiencing it, visitors witness the transformation of individual questions and queries posed to the digital catalog, transmitted through synaptic firings of form, color, and light, into a display of emergent collective intelligence of unprecedented visual expression."

Ralph Helmick

Use of text in P.A. is usually unfortunate and often pathetic.

It asks language to do what visual art should be accomplishing.

It's didactic, not poetic. And what are we aiming for, anyway?

Notable exceptions abound, but 99% of the time text drains an artwork of its power.

It's like we don't trust the art, or we don't trust the public.

In *Filament Mind* the use of text is fitting and logical. The words are termini and vectors.

As far as I'm concerned the words might as well be in Swahili.

They convey a greater meaning in purely visual terms.

Nice ambition here, and beautifully realized.

Janet Zweig

I love the look of this piece, its ambitious scope, and its dazzling use of technology. As a counterpoint, I think it might be useful to ask why so many pieces made for libraries use the library search process as the subject of the work.

Cath Brunner

We saw many, many examples of gratuitous use of fiber optic and LED lighting in the applications.

Filament Mind however, illustrates the media in service of the concept. Like the neuro-pathways and firing synapsis of the brain, the fiber optic cables are carrying ideas and making connections. And like the human brain and the mind-boggling capacity of internet search, this work is ambitious – it does not wimp out – 5 miles of fiber optic cabling!

3

(LOVE LETTER)

Lead Pencil Studio: Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo

Inversion +/-

Portland, OR

Regional Arts & Culture Council

\$700,000 permanent

"Inversion +/- is a sculpture in three parts located at the approaches for the Hawthorne and Morrison Bridges in Portland's Central Eastside Industrial District, an industrial sanctuary just across the river from downtown. These monumental drawings in space render "ghosts" of buildings demolished in the 1950's for highway construction, including a cast-iron foundry, warehouse and an apartment building. At Hawthorne, two sculptural forms, constructed with a matrix of weathered steel, form the front and back corners of a building. At Morrison the matrix renders the perimeter of the same building form emphasizing the negative space surrounding it. In reconstructing remnants from the past and building out to the previous property lines, the sculpture explores the scale and complexity of the lost civic fabric, suggesting an alternate reading of history or a future not yet formed, creating a call and response across the distance of several blocks."

Cath Brunner

Lead Pencil Studio—Daniel Mihalyo and Annie Han — are true renaissance artists. Trained in both visual art and architecture, their practice spans self-initiated temporary site interventions and installations, museum and gallery exhibitions, architectural design—and now a growing body of work in the public

realm. And they do it all with a highly original, layered and considered point of view and a complete commitment to the beauty and power of the physical form.

Lead Pencil Studio has used this metal cross-hatching technique before to suggest the edges and volume of form. But the ambitious scale of this work is remarkable. Each piece is 80' x 80' in plan with varying heights from 45-60' tall. The scale really does successfully create an interstitial zone that hovers somewhere between monumental sculpture, cityscape and transportation infrastructure. This artwork transcends object to suggest an entire neighborhood and yet it is so clearly an exquisitely made object. Daniel and Annie are very hands-on makers – often fabricating their art, even at a large and complex scale. They temporarily relocated from Seattle to Portland to realize *Inversion +/-*.

As the application narrative states, this work is an extremely inventive way to mark the history of the site, not only offering a remembrance of what was, but suggesting what might be and inserting a powerful visual that captures the passing of time and the continual evolution of place.

When I see this caliber of artists working in the public realm – my heart sings. And when you couple artistic genius with the arts administrative excellence that has always been at the heart of the Regional Arts and Culture Council — well this is what you get.

And this panel loves you for it.

Janet Zweig

This piece is beautiful and virtuosic. It engages with the history of place in a magical way without being didactic. It's surprisingly folded into the fabric of the site, and it literally reveals and frames what's been lost.

Ralph Helmick

I love this ghostly piece. And in pondering it two quotes came to mind.

From Goethe: Architecture is frozen music.

From Debussy: Music is the space between the notes.

4

Ann Morton

Ground Cover

Phoenix, AZ

City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture Public Art Program

\$15,000 temporary

“Ground Cover is an artwork that unites one of the oldest of “home makers” arts with the cause of providing comfort and warmth for the homeless.

Created by artist Ann Morton to beautify a vacant downtown Phoenix lot and help the homeless, it involved more than 300 weavers, quilters, knitters and textile artists – “blanketeers” – from 22 U.S. states and two provinces in Canada.

Together, they produced 300 individual blankets that, when put together, formed a 116-foot x 50-foot ground cover featuring a colossal image of lush desert flowers.

Each of the smaller blankets measures 40 inches by 70 inches and comprised up to 28 10 in. X 10 in. squares.

Made from a predetermined color, each square acted as a “pixel” in the overall image.

The monumental blanket was displayed December 6 and 7, 2013, on a vacant lot at 1st and McKinley Streets in downtown Phoenix.

After the two-day installation, this “ground cover” was disassembled into smaller blankets, and given to social service agencies to distribute to the homeless.

As part of the creation of the blankets, Morton hosted a series of “knit in’s.” At each of these gatherings blanketeers were brought together to share techniques while also introduced to social service

professionals who shared information about homelessness. The result was a community-based effort to nurture both the physical space of the city and the people who inhabit the area.”

Janet Zweig

Here's a project that addresses a social issue directly and has tangible social benefits – the blankets that were lovingly made and then given away. It has a program of informing participants about homelessness through collective engagement. Its stated mission was to activate a vacant lot, which it does. It creates a moment of beauty through collective action. Finally, it results in a resonant collective image in the memories of the participants that can then be shared through the video of the event.

Cath Brunner

We have to ensure that we do more than create a beautiful spectacle, although that type of event can focus attention onto the greatest challenges of our time like homelessness, social inequity, economic decline or global warming. But as we engage in this practice we have to question what kind of lasting impact are we having? What solutions are we part of?

Ralph Helmick

Ground Cover inescapably draws comparison to the AIDS quilt, and the similarities and differences between the two are worth noting.

They're both political and personal and would fall into the sector of Social Practice public art.

The AIDS quilt garnered widespread attention, and rightly so, in an era when the White House wouldn't even acknowledge the scope of the epidemic.

The AIDS quilt is “pure” social practice, because the esthetics really aren't the point.

In fact, its power was not at all dependent on esthetics.

Ground Cover is more visually coherent, and that's a good thing.

The submission's entry made no comment on the visual life of the blankets after the piece was disassembled and distributed.

What does it mean to wear an Orange Badge of Homelessness?

Would it make the scope of the problem more clear to the larger culture?

5

Adam Frank

ARBOR

Eskenazi Health General Hospital, Indianapolis, IN

Eskenazi Health, Blackburn Architects & HOK

\$310,000 permanent

ARBOR is a permanent art installation for a new general hospital in Indianapolis. This eight-part work displays optically accurate shadows of native trees in the elevator lobbies. The tree shadows imply the presence of real trees just beyond the glass surface of floor-to-ceiling light boxes.

This artwork is more than photographs reproduced on glass. It employs an innovative technique that provides true, optical depth of field to the shadow forms. Highly detailed 3D models are sliced vertically. Each segment is rendered onto a transparent surface and arranged at different depths. The light passes through the layers and onto the surface of the etched glass. The unique layering technique creates blur in the distant areas while holding incredibly high detail in the leaves closest to the glass surface. Each vein of these leaves is visible. It also provides true, depth of field. Optical and rendered dappled light effects can be seen through the tree branches. The resulting image is both 3D and 2D, detailed and ephemeral simultaneously.

Cath Brunner

ARBOR packs a wallop of function into a beautiful form. It brings the healing power of the natural world into the hospital – a proven strategy for speeding recovery and resilience by reducing stress and feelings of hopelessness or isolation. Located at each elevator lobby, it also serves as orientation and wayfinding – an important function of art in a hospital. And the successful collaboration of architects and engineers and artist delivered artwork that functions as an innovative ambient light source.

As beautiful as these images are, static pictures often do not do justice to the extraordinary physical presence of Adam Frank's work. The narrative provided in the application describes the quality of shadow and substance and spatial illusion captured in this installation. Based on Frank's long investigation of the evocative place between light and dark, fleeting shadow and solid form, I believe it's an artwork that is quite remarkable.

6

(WILD CARD)

Patrick Renner

Funnel Tunnel

Houston, TX

Art League Houston

\$25,000 temporary

"Funnel Tunnel is a temporary site-specific artwork commissioned by Art League Houston and created by Houston-based artist Patrick Renner. The snaking 180-foot sculpture is described as a "colorful, ground-hugging tornado winding through the trees on the median strip of Montrose Boulevard".

Located opposite the ALH Funnel Tunnel is the first of a series of esplanade sculptures that are part of ALH's Esplanade Project. The piece was built from 7,000 pounds of donated steel and a U-Haul full of painted, recycled wooden strips gathered by the artist and the local community. Most of the wood came from a turn-of-the-century cotton gin that was being dismantled, acquired after the artist posted a request for architectural refuse on Facebook. The community helped paint the strips of wood using paint donated by Valspar during a party that ALH hosted in a nearby parking lot. It was ALH's idea to start bringing art onto the Montrose medians. The street is one of the busiest roads in town.

Renner calls his latest creation a "visual arts speed bump" and considers it a re-imagining of a public space dominated by vehicles."

Ralph Helmick

Well, yeah. This is certainly a visual arts speed bump.

Funnel Tunnel is an outstanding example of resourcefulness, energy—including community energy—and artistic chops.

It succeeds because the artist didn't relinquish the role of head chef.

Obviously lots of people were involved in the piece's fabrication, but just as obviously there was a head chef, the artist, steering esthetics.

This is why we have artists.

A cautionary note: A lot of us are guilty of overuse of ColorKinetics LED's and indulging in rainbow programs. We've got to dial it back and use them with more subtlety, trusting the form itself, not its lighting.

7

IN:SITE

Art on Fond du Lac

Milwaukee, WI

with art by Reginald Baylor, Laci Coppins, Robert Byrd, Erin Dorbin, George Jones, Annushka Peck, Joseph R. Reeves, and Chelsea WaitCity of Milwaukee Neighborhood Improvement Development Corporation

\$40,000 temporary

"IN:SITE was invited to install art at 17th and Fond du Lac Avenue. A long process of partnering and community engagement followed. The art and opening events made this prominent but depressed artery more attractive, and acted as a catalyst for neighborhood development, increased transportation safety, and fostered cooperation between community partners.

Nine local artists were involved. There were twenty-three pieces of art along twenty city blocks. Diverse installations included sculpture that responds to the history of an Underground Railroad site, quotes from

Milwaukee's "First Lady of the Black Press" who died at 102 in 2005, a functional sculptural greenhouse built from recycled materials, and oversized photo imagery of senior living community residents' hands."

Janet Zweig

There were several entries we looked at that could fall into the category of community arts. Since many of these projects are primarily process-based, it was hard for us to judge their direct effects on their neighborhoods. But because I've worked in Milwaukee, I've had the chance to see projects led by IN:SITE. Typically, as in this project, IN:SITE works in areas of high unemployment, foreclosed properties, and poverty. For *Art on Fond du Lac*, since few residents of the area had internet access, IN:SITE printed 10,000 copies of a newsletter about the project and hand-delivered them door to door. Once the project was complete, they led history tours to encourage people from other neighborhoods to visit an area they might otherwise have been afraid to venture into.

This is an organization that does not drop art into a place; it is really OF the place, for and committed to Milwaukee, its history and its neighborhoods. So my feeling is that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts in IN:SITE'S work. The art is primarily the transformative process, the connections made and the lives that were enriched through that process.

8

Glenn Kaino

Arch

Pittsburgh International Airport, Landside Terminal
Pittsburgh, PA

Andy Warhol Museum, commissioning agency
\$130,745 permanent (from original temporary status)

Arch was originally commissioned to celebrate Pittsburgh's 250th Anniversary as part of a larger initiative.

Glenn Kaino completed and installed the sculpture in the fall of 2008 in its original location of the corner of Seventh Street and Fort Duquesne Boulevard in Downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District.

Intended to be in place for six months, it was so loved by the community that it remained Downtown until November 2011, when it was removed by

McKay Lodge Conservation Laboratory.

Finding a permanent, publicly accessible home for a 19-foot tall robot was a challenge, but due to the Pittsburgh International Airport's commitment to supporting the region's art and culture, as well as several successful local partnerships and foundation support, the team was able to return a beloved work of art to the public realm.

Arch is located in a landside terminal of the airport, and can be visited without entering security.

To quote Hugh Hackmeister, Manager of Architectural Services at the airport: "Arch has added new life and energy to the Landside Terminal at the Airport. Today with the addition of the sculpture, both young and old are drawn to the area where Arch now stands guard. Visitors look on with smiles as they identify the local bridges that are part of the region's fabric on a daily basis."

Ralph Helmick

Well, a beloved Transformer is back by popular demand. Nice.

And the bridges in the City of Bridges are transformed and translated to excellent effect.

This project stimulates larger thoughts about an artwork's permanence.

It's a big deal in public art, where considerations of permanence can lead to timidity in the commissioning process.

Deaccessioning is also a big deal.

So how can we protect projects—especially permanent projects—from initial responses that may be reflexive, or even philistine?

And how can we protect our communities from being permanently saddled with suboptimal artwork that really should go?

Arch's lessons in temporary-to-permanent status provide some clues.

(LOVE LETTER)**Matthew Mazzotta****Open House**

York, Alabama

The Coleman Center for the Arts

\$30,300 permanent

*"Open House is a community-built physically transforming House/Theater for York, AL.**In 2011, Matthew Mazzotta was invited by the Coleman Center for the Arts to organize an artwork with the people of York. During Matthew's initial visit, he asked people from the community to bring something from their living room so that they could re-create a living room outdoors in the middle of the street as a way to provoke discussion... and generate ideas... From this conversation, they developed a project that uses the materials of an abandoned house as well as the land it sits on to build a transforming structure on the footprint of the old house.**On June 15 2013, a ribbon cutting by the Mayor of York, Gena Robbins, inaugurated Open House followed with an invocation prayer by Reverend Willie, performances by a gospel choir and the local R&B funk band Time Zone, and a screening of Dr. Seuss's The Lorax. Since the opening day, several films and art shorts have been screened and the Mayor held the town meeting in Open House.**Open House is designed to require cooperation and takes four people 1.5 hours to unfold the structure. The foundation of railroad ties anchors custom-fabricated hinges to five rows of stadium seating that fold down with the aid of a hand winch.**Open House directly addresses the lack of public space in York, AL by providing a physical location as common ground for community dialogue and activities. The new structure carries the weight of the past through the materials that were salvaged and repurposed from the old structure. When Open House is fully unfolded, it provides an opportunity for people to come together and experience the community from a new perspective. When it folds back up, it resembles the original abandoned house, reminding people of the history of what was there before. Events of Open House are actively programmed by the Coleman Center for the Arts and free to the public."***Janet Zweig**

I'm sure a lot of you have seen this project. It's been viewed at least 130 thousand times on the web. I showed it to my students this year, so I was delighted that it was submitted to this competition. *Open House* has everything: visual excitement, public engagement, and a generative life that can continually change. And beneath this playful and ambitious transforming object lies a serious social issue – the lack of the Commons, the lack of public space almost anywhere that is truly held in common.

It takes a lot of people to make this kind of magical thing happen besides an intrepid artist. It takes a lot of people who are willing to say yes instead of no. They include a daring arts agency and a mayor who is willing to endorse a work like this.

Most importantly, this is a piece that gives agency to the public. It hands over a beautiful and intriguing work of art that can be used for the common good. It's a wonderful work.

Ralph Helmick

In our introduction this morning each of us articulated some of the qualities we seek in public art. I left one out.

But I'll now confess that one of my original goals in jurying Year in Review was what I'll call "the ruthless eradication of the scourge of social practice public art".

And truthfully, many of this year's submissions validated this perspective.

But as the jurying process progressed I kept getting busted by works like this. (Let's hope that having one's prejudices blown away builds character.)

I will say, however, that in every social practice artwork contributing to my change of heart and mind, social practice was indelibly wedded to some manner of wonderful visual accomplishment.

On top of all its other fine qualities, *Open House* is an inventive, creative SCULPTURE. Kudos.

10

Joe O'Connell and Blessing Hancock

Ballroom Luminoso

IH 35 Underpass at Theo and Malone Avenues

San Antonio, Texas

Public Art San Antonio

\$160,000 permanent

"Ballroom Luminoso transforms an ordinary underpass into a community-gathering place and shadow theater. A series of six brilliantly lit, color-changing chandeliers hang from the underpass, casting bright shapes and colored shadows. The chandeliers are made from recycled bike parts and LED lights.

The artists responded to a call asking for a public art installation that incorporates a lighting element and offers an innovative solution for the use of this space as a neighborhood destination.

The nearby high school students frequently use this underpass as a transitory space in daily treks back and forth from home to school."

Cath Brunner

Freeway underpasses are tough spaces. They create zones of apprehension and darkness and bifurcate neighborhoods and cities. The awkward scale relative to pedestrian use coupled with what is typically a somewhat brutal and meager material palette is hard to overcome.

This artwork totally transforms this space into a place that looks like somewhere you would want to hang out. The bike-part chandelier lighting system is impressive. As you can see in the images, the highway infrastructure, as well as the ground plane is completely covered by saturated shadow/light painting.

11

Sans façon

Fire Hydrant Drinking Fountains

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

City of Calgary Utilities & Environment Protection department (UEP), Customer and Community Initiatives- Watershed+ for the City of Calgary's Public Art Program

\$40,000 temporary

"Installed in numerous public locations in Calgary, ...[this project] blurs public art with public function, Throughout the summer months many thousands of people engaged with the works as they popped up around the city, providing safe and free drinking water for festivals and major public events in Calgary in a playful and unexpected way.

The family of three fountains – "Strangers", "Family" and "Group" – is an exploration of the role of public fountains as social spaces, creating three different forms of gathering. With their workings visible these unique fountains make the direct connection to the city's hidden infrastructure understandable, intriguing and invites us to celebrate something we often take for granted, drinking water.

These fountains illustrate the initiatives being realized through the Calgary Public Art Program's Watershed+, an innovative approach to public art embedding artists and artistic practices within a City of Calgary Utilities & Environment Protection department core activities."

Janet Zweig

Sans façon is the only group that we chose for multiple projects; in fact three of their projects are on our list.

For this project, located at 8 sites in Calgary, the list of agencies required to pull this off is long: The Fire Department, scores of people at Water Services, the Water Sampling team at the Biology Laboratory, Water Resources, the Hydrants Supervisor, City fabricators, and more. The City was a real collaborator on this temporary project.

Like the previous project we showed by Sans Façon, this piece is deceptively simple but actually layered. It's about water and where it comes from, about unnoticed hydrants and what they are for, and about creating a new shared social space. It also shows how an engaging city-wide project can be built with off the shelf parts and modest means.

12

(WILD CARD)

Nick Cave

Heard•New York

Grand Central Terminal

New York, NY

MTA Arts for Transit & Urban Design

\$50,000 temporary

“Artist Nick Cave transformed Grand Central Terminal with 30 life-size, multicolored horses, “grazing” and periodically breaking into choreographed movement accompanied by live harp music. In celebration of Grand Central’s centennial, HEARD•NY celebrates this site of perpetual motion with an unexpected and joyful intervention into the station’s daily activity.

As Cave’s first public art project in NYC, it introduced audiences to his wearable “Soundsuits,” and turned the station into a place of surprise and awe. Sixty dancers from The Alvin Ailey Dance School performed in the Soundsuits and attracted approx. 15,000 commuters throughout the one week event. The Soundsuits were also on view to showcase the meticulously crafted works, inspired by costume traditions from African tribal ritual, Renaissance pageantry, to Mardi Gras.”

Janet Zweig

Why is this my Wild Card? Because *Heard•New York* shows what can happen when talented artists and experienced administrators collaborate on an epic event. It showcases collaboration on two fronts: Creative Time collaborated with MTA Arts for Transit, and artist Nick Cave collaborated with The Alvin Ailey Dance School. They then chose the most public and crowded of places in all New York and gave commuters an awe-inspiring spectacle in the middle of their day.

13

Karl Unnasch

Ruminant (The Grand Masticator)

Cornfield near Highway K

Reedsburg, WI

Wormfarm Institute / Farm Art D'Tour

\$40,000 temporary (with hopes for permanence)

Ralph Helmick

One of my favorite responses to public art is “What the hell?”

“In October of 2013 Karl Unnasch installed his rural culturally-themed Ruminant in the cornfield of Ron and Judy Churchill of Reedsburg, Wisconsin as part of the Farm Art D'Tour’s public art roadside tour.

This sculpture was constructed from a repurposed 6600 John Deere combine harvester and was clad with 34 leaded stained glass panels, which were lit from behind with LED’s. The installation was constructed to withstand the natural elements as well as potential vandalism. The LED network was set on a timer to conserve energy during the daytime hours. Harkening back to the Artist’s rural Midwestern roots, the artwork is a nostalgic tribute to many years of farm life influences. The imagery used in the panels is a tribute to the harvest as seen through the eyes of things that “chew”.

Among the stained glass images are:

–a termite

–a mustachioed face eating sweet corn

–an assortment of chopping and cutting tools

–even that of a child eating a crayon.”

Ralph Helmick

Chew on that.

“The reception for this temporary installation was so positive that there was a public outcry to keep the installation in place for longer than the time allotted by the Farm Art D’Tour schedule.

Currently, Reedsburg ArtsLink is raising funds to permanently acquire the piece and install it in a city park adjacent to the Reedsburg Chamber of Commerce.”

Ralph Helmick

Okay people, we’re trippin’ in the countryside...

You know, ideally, deep down, we should all aspire to a constant state of ecstatic wonder.

We should be appreciating the universal transcendent power of a leaf, a strand of hair, a crushed beer can, of anything at all. Of everything.

But most of the time we need help...

For the fortunate souls in and around rural Reedsburg, Wisconsin, help has arrived in the form of *Ruminant*.

They had an opportunity to happen upon this gentle, shocking, hallucinatory creation.

It is resourceful, elegant, beautifully crafted. And its barroom stained glass style meshes mighty well with a repurposed combine.

This piece might make me want to just say “yes” to drugs. But it’s so soulful I won’t really need them.

14

Malcolm Cochran***Goodale Park Fountain***

Columbus, OH

Friends of Goodale Park

\$235,000 permanent

“Goodale Park is one of Columbus’ oldest parks. Established in 1851, it — along with the Washington Mall and St. Louis’ Lafayette Park — was one of the pioneering precursors to New York’s Central Park. In developing the design for the fountain, the artist researched the history of Goodale Park including the conventions of period fountains. Early photographs document the vertical, rockwork fountains that have been a part of the park for nearly all its existence. Research on historic fountains produced numerous images of fish, dolphins, turtles, snakes and other creatures spouting water. None of them, Cochran thought, naturally emit streams of water from their mouths. The historic Sells “Circus House” was the most notable residence on this park. The Sells Brothers’ Circus was renowned for its troupe of elephants (an animal the artist observed that does shower and spray water). Another wonderful aspect of the Goodale Park historic fountains — which continues in this newest one — is year-round operation. The winter presence of this artwork is really extraordinary — completely shrouded in a giant ice formation.”

Cath Brunner

This looks like a work that will be beloved. It continues a tradition long supported in this place. It took 10 years of volunteer efforts on the part of the Friends of the Goodale Park to produce the work. That speaks volumes about the commitment to and expectations of public art in the park. I have never seen a fountain allowed to operate and freeze over in winter but I think that aspect adds considerably to the character of this work. The frozen shroud provides an annual, ephemeral installation at the heart of the park. The form revealed in the peak of winter when the fountain is completely encapsulated in ice will probably never be the same. The beginning freeze and accumulation on the pair of elephants in late fall and the slow revealing of the pair again as the ice melts away in the spring is already part of my imagination.

15

(LOVE LETTER)**Jennifer Steinkamp*****Murmuration***

Gov. George Deukmajian Courthouse
Long Beach, CA
Long Beach Judicial Partners
\$1,200,000 permanent

"Murmuration is a digital animation activated within a transparent LED display situated in the middle of the five-story lobby of a courthouse in Long Beach, CA.

The LED display blends into the stainless steel mesh screen that hangs in front of the pedestrian bridges crossing the atrium.

While researching historic representations of justice, Steinkamp was intrigued by the image of Ma'at, the Egyptian goddess of justice depicted with an ostrich feather in her headband serving as a symbol of truth and justice.

Vividly colored feathers of various types and sizes float and move as if animated by wind and gravity.

Steinkamp constructed the imagery bit by bit and then animated the forms. This labor-intensive process is the hallmark of her work and accounts for the highly unique and compelling imagery for which she is known.

Murmuration provides beauty and respite for users of the building, whose business is often stressful."

Ralph Helmick

I've created sculptures for a few courthouses myself and was unaware of the symbolism of the ostrich feather central to this design, so I checked out the artist's website, which explains that: "The goddess's ostrich feather is an emblem of truth and justice.

Egyptians believed that at the time of death, Ma'at weighs the feather against the heart of the deceased. If the weight of the heart is lighter or heavier than the feather the soul is damned to hell."

Well, there's a meditation on justice.

But even without the back-story this is some impressive eye candy that goes far beyond eye candy.

The piece is transporting. It's evanescent.

This is first class high technology in the service of visual poetry.

Cath Brunner

It's really hard to do light-based media installations like this in public and do it well. Public spaces are active, often highly lit, and have high levels of visual competition not found in the totally controlled and art-centric space of a museum. Steinkamp's museum work is totally immersive and captivating. This piece is exquisitely detailed and integrated into its site. It's commanding and offers that same kind of immersive experience in this public venue that is so much a part of Steinkamp's museum installations.

Janet Zweig

A bit more about Steinkamp's process: She models the images in a 3-D program – they aren't photographs. As she explains: "I use Maya software and Ncloth dynamics. This is an algorithm that simulates cloth in various environments. I used these effects to throw feathers I modeled with wind and turbulence. The feathers collide with each other inside an invisible cube." I think the effect of this on such a large scale is pretty spectacular.

16

Dawoud Bey

Strangers/Community: Tacoma

University of Washington-Tacoma

Tacoma, WA

Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA)

\$73,630 permanent

"Dawoud Bey photographed pairs of subjects at the University of Washington- Tacoma campus, as part of his ongoing work exploring and identifying diverse communities. Bey's paired portraits feature people from different parts of the greater Tacoma and university communities, revealing superficial similarities and differences while expressing the connections that bring people together. Bey describes these pieces as "attempts to visualize the often complicated nature of community by bringing together two

people from this community who ... [may or may not] know each other. These two individuals bring their own narratives, histories, and presences together in order to negotiate their joint presentation to the camera—and the larger world—as members of their particular community.” UWT faculty, staff, and students organized a collection of events to introduce the project and artist to the community, solicited subjects, scheduled sittings, and assisted Bey with his photo shoots. Over 60 different subjects were photographed, resulting in more than 30 pairings and over 500 photographs. Of those, ten were ultimately selected and sited in the reading room at the Snoqualmie Library on the UWT campus.”

Cath Brunner

We use the word “community” so much in our practice – too often in reference or even deference to a faceless, vague collective. Dawoud Bey contemplated the “complicated nature of community” and offers these brilliant portraits as definition and invitation. You could look at these photos over and over again. They invite viewers to construct their own stories and navigate their own imaged connections. One criticism – I want to see all 500 photos not just 10!

Credit should be given to Kurt Kiefer the curator for providing the opportunity for an artist like Bey to work in the public realm.

Janet Zweig

I’m very excited when talented artists who work successfully in the gallery realm dip their toe into public art. When these artists do work in the public art realm, it expands the field. It seems critical to me that we find ways to encourage and welcome more of these talented studio artists into the field.

In looking at the entries for this competition, we noticed a vocabulary that is unique to public art alone. This marginalizes the field and prevents it from fully participating in a larger conversation about art. So welcoming in studio artists is a step toward breaking that divide. As a group, this panel discussed why more gallery artists are not going into public art. We wondered: Is it that the process is often too onerous for them? Is it that some panels don’t select challenging artists? Or is it that their commercial galleries discourage them from being diverted away from gallery and museum shows?

17

Cliff Garten

Ribbons

United Nations Plaza

San Francisco, CA

Art and Architecture *Program* of the US General Services Administration

\$380,000 permanent

“Ribbons is a landscape sculpture in the open courtyard of 50 UN Plaza. As part of an historic renovation, the artwork balances contemporary sculpture with sustainable development strategies and beautifully responds to the Beaux-Arts architecture. Ribbons presents a powerful horizontal composition of sculptures made from cast, recycled concrete, carved granite fountains, and a rhythmic circulation system of permeable decomposed granite paving. The sculptural benches rising from the paving loosely reflect the twists of a ribbon, referencing Beaux-Arts decorative traditions. The horizontal emphasis of the sculptures is countered by the vertical movement of a grid of Himalayan White Birch — a compositional compliment to the white brick walls of the courtyard.

There are three to four different surface textures, from polished to sandblasted on the sides of each sculpture that help the twisting motion to register its movement on the form. A recycled concrete mix was developed with additions of dolomite in order to achieve a material that could hold its own integrity alongside the white brick and grey granite of the building. The concrete fabrication system of interchangeable and repeatable parts, allowed the project to achieve a maximum effect for a minimum budget. And even the irrigation system maximizes returns while minimizing water use by adjusting to day-to-day weather conditions.”

Cath Brunner

This artwork serves as a beautiful complement to the historic structure. It is elegant and thoughtful in its use of materials.

Ralph Helmick

I very much admire this project, but didn't vote for it.

Ribbons should win a landscape architecture award. It's wonderful.

But note that its "art" components are its least convincing.

Cliff Garten is a true talent, able to play either side of the divide between landscape architecture and public art.

And yes, there is a divide. There should be a divide.

Here Cliff Garten is wearing his landscape architect hat.

As we "expand" the field to all sorts of possibilities we can also dilute it, losing focus on what public art is uniquely qualified to do.

In the process we can also unwittingly disrespect the often mind-blowing creativity in adjacent fields.

Increasingly, fields poach on other fields.

Witness artists poaching on architecture.

Even worse—hello, Daniel Liebeskind—architects trying to be sculptors.

Ditto with landscape architecture, artist-designed seating, social work, community organization, art therapy... the list goes on.

Have you seen how creative industrial designers have been with seating?

Can we acknowledge how uncomfortable and unconvincing most artist-designed seating is?

Our field is experiencing "mission creep".

While we investigate what public art can do, let's think about what public art can do uniquely well.

18

(WILD CARD)

Sans façon

Bow Flow Watershed+ Public Art Residency

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

City of Calgary Utilities and Environmental Protection Department (UEP),

Customer and Community Initiatives, City of Calgary Public Art Program

\$70,000 temporary

Cath Brunner

When asked to list the materials used in the public art project the description begins "artist, studio, crew shack trailer converted as a mobile studio" I think they forgot to list "imagination, extraordinary leap of faith and unbelievable civic agency willing to challenge assumptions and the status quo."

"Rachel Duckhouse's 12-month Artist Residency within the City of Calgary Utilities & Environment Protection department is part of Watershed+ an ambitious pilot project implemented by San Façon in collaboration with the city's wastewater and urban water service agencies. Watershed+ Artist Residency is proof that public art that engages, challenges and excites can take many forms and can leave enduring legacy on a place and its people. The body of work Duckhouse created in print, drawing and audio, visualize the infinitely dynamic flow of energy within the rivers, and grew out of in-depth collaborations with senior flood engineers, scientists, school children, institutions and organizations."

Cath Brunner

This is a hard project to present at YIR. Up against the powerful visual images — these images pretty much depict people in offices sharing ideas. The paradigm shifts that can happen through this type of work and the incremental steps towards better civic policy or resource management are hard to capture in a photo. Process is always a more difficult thing to quantify than product. This work really matters. I believe in this type of working with my whole heart and soul because I have witnessed the shifts and opening up to new possibilities that can come of embedding an artist within a civic agency. To quote the

narrative submitted with the project application: "Most important, her embedding within the City of Calgary Utilities & Environment Protection department forged enduring relationships at the heart of a City's corporation between artists and engineers, allowing them to share the understanding of urban rivers emotionally rather than just with data."

Ralph Helmick

This project perfectly illustrates the difference between design and art.
Watershed + is design.

19

Sean Healy and Joe Thurston

All That is Solid Melts into Air

Anstett & Peterson Halls, University of Oregon

Eugene, OR

Oregon Percent for Art in Public Places

\$30,000 permanent

"These two 80" x 80" grids were commissioned for identical stairwells in the University of Oregon College of Business.

Responding to the nature of the College, Healy and Thurston created each grid of 100 handmade acrylic resin cubes.

Each transparent cube encases either an origami-folded dollar bill, sculpted by artists Midori Hirose and Noell Horne, or a stack of various coins equaling one dollar.

Healy and Thurston explain: 'Presenting currency in this fashion—abundantly visible, while removed from circulation—demystifies money as an object of desire, while simultaneously heightening the fetishistic status routinely bestowed on it. Here, the dollar bills or coins are plainly themselves, but imbued with aesthetic value, they amount to more than themselves: painstakingly folded into beautifying forms and preserved as precious specimens.'"

Ralph Helmick

This sculpture is materially complex and gorgeous.

The installation is political art that nonetheless fulfills the esthetic obligations of any public commission. And it's beautifully fabricated.

Cath Brunner

I want to make a plea for all of us to pay more attention and care to siting work within a building. Many projects entered into YIR look pasted onto or into the building. Although it can be extremely difficult, there needs to be better coordination and collaboration between artist and architect in siting. Is this piece too high? Is this orientation within the stairwells as good a location as could be had?

20

Jim Drain and Bhakti Baxter

Port Miami- The Bollard Project and Coral Reef City

Miami, FL

Miami-Dade County Art in Public Places

\$195,000 Total: (\$130,000- The Bollard Project) / (\$65,000- Coral Reef City)

'These works of art enrich PortMiami is one of America's busiest ports, welcoming more than 4 million cruise vacationers each year.

The two new public art installations, Jim Drain's The Bollard Project and Bhakti Baxter's Coral Reef City transform the campus of PortMiami and span the entire landscape (3 linear miles) including seven cruise terminals and eighteen parking toll booths. It's also worth noting that this is a retrofit of an existing development.

Jim Drain's The Bollard Project uses bright, expressive color combinations to transform the utilitarian function of over 1,000 bollards into a signature work of art. The color sequences and rigorous geometries

reference maritime flag signage. Viewed as a whole, the installation's vibrant colors and rhythmic patterns recreate the celebratory 'bon voyage' moments experienced by the cruise passengers.

Bhakti Baxter's design for the toll collection booths references Miami's unique position as a gateway to the tropics. The artist collaborated with Coral Morphologic, a Miami-based scientific art endeavor led by marine biologist Colin Foord and musician Jared McKay, to select enlarged macro photographs of corals that inhabit the waters in and around Miami."

Cath Brunner

Jim Drain's *Bollard Project* is an abstract painting/sculpture of sweeping scale and formal beauty. This is a smart intervention (into an existing site and building) that transforms the utilitarian into the remarkable and memorable.

Baxter's work reveals an amazing and largely unseen asset of Miami. The un-Photoshopped images of the coral organisms appear almost psychedelic – certainly the eye-popping, electric vibrancy that seems so Miami.

21

(LOVE LETTER)

Jon Rubin

The Time and the Temperature

Capital Crossroads Special Improvement District, fiscal agent for
"Finding Time: ColumbusPublicArt2012"

Columbus, OH

(Trinity Episcopal Church is on the northeast corner of Capitol Square, site of the Ohio Statehouse, and the center of government, financial, and business institutions and enterprises.)

\$20,200 temporary

"Jon Rubin responded directly to the curatorial premise to address the notion of time in a temporary work for Finding Time in Columbus, Ohio. His project consisted of a custom-made sign, similar to ones commonly seen that give the exact time and temperature where they are installed. But Rubin's sign told the current time and temperature in Tehran, Iran—a city that is geographically distant, yet is in our news on a daily basis. "The Time and The Temperature" presented a moment in the city where the space between here and there was collapsed, encouraging the citizens of Columbus to temporarily project themselves into a foreign place and circumstance. This work sparked public interest — and controversy — throughout its five-month run. Attendance was high at open public forums with cultural, religious, academic, and political leaders discussing the complicated issues at stake in U.S.– Iranian relations. Iranian expatriates gathered their support of this momentary opportunity to talk about the Iran they know, the Iran where their friends and family still live, and the Iranian people portrayed in movies and the nightly news. Jewish Iranian expatriate author Roya Hakakian visited Columbus on behalf of the Iranian community as a spin off of these discussions. The final public program was a screening at the Columbus Museum of Art of underground Iranian video works hosted via Skype by a young curator in Tehran. Rubin's work spurred real and deep discussion about time, place, and cultural differences..."

Janet Zweig

I understand that the siting of this piece was complicated; Jon Rubin originally wanted it to be sited on the State House grounds but that was refused. He then chose a site near the State House in front of an Episcopal church. The process of permission for this engaged the church leadership and they eventually approved it. The minister who championed the project decided to speak about reconciliation, war, and peace in his sermons during the time the piece was displayed, so he became the conduit between the artwork and the community. Because this was a difficult piece for the city, Rubin did radio interviews, showed films, and hosted public meetings for the Iranian and Jewish communities of Columbus.

What Jon Rubin is doing in the public realm is unique. He brings a witty edge to political activism while inspiring discussion and engagement. He is an artist/activist of the highest order. In addition, I think this piece shows what can be accomplished if an administrator welcomes a challenging work as a way to

generate public discussion. Instead of fearing a controversy, these administrators welcomed the opportunity to create dialogue. This is an incredible gesture that public art can accomplish in the right hands. And the temporary nature of the commission helped them all to do something daring and brave.

Cath Brunner

The fact that there was a curatorial premise is notable. The notion of “Finding Time” not only framed the artist’s response but could be seen as an invitation to citizens of Columbus to investigate the artwork beyond snap judgments or casual indifference.

Credit goes to Shelly Willis (Curator / Program Consultant) and Malcolm Cochran (Administrator) for developing such a successful conceptual framework.

Ralph Helmick

I’ve always wanted political art to be effective.

Wouldn’t that be convenient?

It’s sad that it almost never is effective, preaching to the choir, at best cheering on a partisan cohort.

It can deepen empathy, but does it change minds?

The Time and the Temperature is a brilliant political work.

The esthetics involved—and they are real, and they are subtle, and they are superb—are those of the everyday.

The visuals are almost anonymous. Perfect for the job.

There’s still a lot to like about our country, but one of the worst things about our nation is its myopia.

This project provides a corrective lens.

I keep thinking about pinhole cameras when I see this piece.

It doesn’t tell us what to think.

Interpretation is entirely up to the viewer.

I’m certain the symposia surrounding the effort are great.

But I love *The Time and the Temperature* as a physical artwork, plain and simple.

I wish it were permanent, and I wish it had a counterpart in Tehran.

22

Virgil Marti

Five Standards (Dazzle)

Philadelphia, PA

City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

\$228,000 permanent

“For this commission for GlaxoSmithKline’s new facility in the Navy Yard, Marti wanted to “pay homage to Philadelphia’s long and important history as a center of both furniture making and ship building.” The site reminded him of the Navy’s “razzle-dazzle” camouflage designed to disguise the orientation, speed and direction of travel of large ships at sea. Marti layered camouflage onto the surface of forms designed to recall a large, docked ship. The resulting effect is a “graphic dazzle” of black and mirrored shapes that chop the viewer’s reflection, while reflecting rippling, watery shapes of light and casting deep, amorphous shadows on the ground that produce a sense of flowing water underneath. Marti states, “The changing seasons, the weather, the qualities of light as the day passes, and of course viewers moving through and around – all become part of the sculpture.”

Janet Zweig

These beautiful sculptures fit in elegantly with the sleek corporate office building yet they make a subtly subversive nod to the history of the place by using dazzle camouflage and references to furniture detailing. I find them truly quirky and unexpected.

23

Lucy + Jorge Orta

70 x 7 The Meal, act XXXIV

Thomas Paine Plaza

Philadelphia, PA

City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program

\$133,000 temporary

“This is one of an ongoing series of ritual meals staged by artists Lucy + Jorge Orta. 70x7 represented a departure from Mural Arts’ traditional concept of “public art,” into the field of temporary and ephemeral experiences. Orta designed table runners and limited-edition plates around the loss of biodiversity and the rapidly disappearing food heritage in the U.S. They brought 900 people around a communal table on October 5 to sample heirloom produce and to debate the politics of food production and the role heirloom foods play in healthy ecologies and food systems. Before the meal, a four-month “season” of more than 20 public events invited Philadelphians to food tastings, cooking demonstrations and tours of weekly farmers’ markets and community gardens. Meal-inspired “kits” were also distributed, allowing people to stage their own versions of 70x7.”

Janet Zweig

I’m impressed that Philadelphia Mural Arts ventured into the realm of social practice with this impressive project. For a relatively low budget, the artists hosted many community events in order to lead up to the main event and to inform the public. Then they used food and beauty – the site, the tables, the custom-made limited-edition Royal Limoges plates, the custom-made aprons and runners, the infographics – to engage people in meaningful conversation. They staged an ambitious final event on a very grand scale.

Ralph Helmick

This is art as social work.

Or social work as art.

I salute the intentions of *70 x7*.

And I salute the results.

But when I step back from the project—and others like it—I wonder how it fits into the mission of public art.

As they say, it does represent a departure from Mural Arts’ traditional concept of public art.

The visuals are here are nice, but they’re secondary.

Issues of heirloom produce, cooking and community debate play a far more crucial role than art.

I want this piece to be funded—it should be funded—but does it come out of the public art budget?

How big is our tent?

When do we lose sight of what public art does best?

For example, over the years Mural Arts has sponsored some outstanding art...

24

(WILD CARD)

Roberto Behar & Rosario Marquardt

Desert Spring

Cave Creek Primary Bridge, Cave Creek Secondary Bridge, Apache Washington Bridge

Phoenix, AZ

Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture

\$700,000 permanent

“This project renders the crash barrier wall invisible to the viewer. The wall is veneered in mosaic tile echoing the Sonoran desert landscape beyond. In so doing, the wall and landscape become one, dissolving one into the other and accomplishing a mirage like effect.

The balcony areas, which appear floating on the veneered mosaic tile wall, incorporate two sitting areas to promote conversation while resting and looking at the beautiful surrounding Sonoran desert landscape. A roof element generously provides shade without interrupting views. This shading device and

the bridge railing are painted in the color of the Palo Verde trees to make them indistinguishable with the surroundings.”

Cath Brunner

Working within Transpo Agencies can test the can-do spirit and ability to re-group and re-pitch of even the most accomplished public art administrators and artists. The spec and maintenance standards go beyond rigorous. Projects begin when your kids are born and might be dedicated by the time they graduate college. But this is important work and we have to be at the table. And we are making a difference one project at a time. It's not because engineers, architects and landscape architects are not capable of or interested in developing more beautiful and expressive forms for highway and bridge infrastructure. But very often the art program is the only way to even open a conversation about aesthetics. But we can and should do more. We have a responsibility to not only insert considerations of aesthetics into infrastructure design, we must insist on achieving truly green solutions as well.

25

Stacy Levy

Spiral Wetland

Lake Fayetteville

Fayetteville, Arkansas

Walton Arts Center commissioning agency

\$30,000 temporary

“Spiral Wetland floats in a large urban lake in Fayetteville Arkansas. Its form is based on the Spiral Jetty by Robert Smithson, one of the most enduring of the land art pieces. Spiral Wetland reaches back to the beginning of eco-art but envisions the next stage of our thinking: to heal and transform the environment for better. This project makes a sustainable change to an historic form.

Floating wetlands have been used recently for water treatment in Australia, China, Singapore, and the United States. They are a form of bio-mimicry: re-creating the natural processes at work in a typical wetland to remove excess nutrients from water. Typically these wetlands are not engineered to have any visual presence. Spiral Wetland takes an engineering solution and turns it into something visually evocative. It creates a place for different species to use: on the top surface, birds are safe from land predators; fish congregate below in the shade; kayakers have a new destination on the lake and fisherman come to catch the fish that live in the forest of roots underneath the mat. Spiral Wetland improves the water quality and provides much needed wetland habitat for fish and other water creatures, while reminding us of the roots of land art.

The lake is one of the largest public park spaces in Fayetteville. It was initially planned that the Spiral Wetland would remain on the lake for a year and then be divided up and adopted by individuals with bio-retention basins and ponds. It may now be adopted by the Fayetteville Watershed Alliance and continue to process the water as the native plants grow and thrive. This artwork is also being studied by the Biology Department of the University of Arkansas for water quality investigation.”

Cath Brunner

Stacy Levy is an artist that understands the science as well as the aesthetics. This type of artwork has the opportunity to shift the way we manage natural resources. Looking at the case of *Floating Wetlands*, it already has. Instead of being removed, it may continue as a living laboratory.

26

Dixie Friend Gay

North Texas Sunrise

Dallas Love Field Airport

Dallas, TX

City of Dallas Office of Cultural Affairs

\$303,350 permanent

“Upon entering the main terminal of Love Field, visitors are greeted by a 60-foot mosaic wall that sits at a focal point in the main lobby.

North Texas Sunrise presents a landscape familiar to many Texans, featuring wildflowers and plants that are found throughout the undisturbed locations along the roadsides in North Texas.

Familiar flowers such as the Purple Coneflower in the lower left, Hop Clover in the center, the large Mexican Hat on the right, represent the vanishing landscape of the natural environment.

The beloved Texas bluebonnet makes an appearance.

The fact that there are no references to human intervention in the landscape in this work imparts both nostalgia for the landscape and a subtle reminder that this type of scene occurs less and less often in our current environment.”

Ralph Helmick

Okay...

The above description is capital “R” Romantic and an ode to the nostalgic.

With some alteration it could be applied to the vast majority of botanically-based designs that constitute an improbably large percentage of public artwork.

Thankfully, *North Texas Sunrise* transcends its own description.

It continues a tradition in American painting that fuses devoted naturalistic rendering with science-y analysis.

The 19th c. painter Martin Johnson Heade comes to mind. Albert Bierstadt’s Luminist skies as well.

This is a tradition that has endured and will endure and deserves to endure.

North Texas Sunrise does credit to this tradition and honors its forbears.

The word “decorative” is most often used as a derogatory adjective in contemporary critical discourse.

Most of the time this is justified.

My question is “where is decoration taking me?” It better be someplace.

North Texas Sunrise makes a strong case for the decorative in that it aims for transcendence.

Nostalgic, maybe.

Elegiac, maybe.

But it takes me places because of its formal strength and even a refreshing druggy quality.

Not at all incidentally, the piece is superbly crafted, the artist working with Mosaika in Montréal.

27

Nina Katchadourian

Grand State of Maine

Van Buren Land Port of Entry

Van Buren, ME

US General Services Administration

\$145,000 permanent

Grand State of Maine is a life-sized bronze moose adorned with official Maine state emblems in celebration of both local pride of accomplishment and pride of place. The artist’s vision was to incorporate not only formal Maine-based images, but also items that Maine residents are proud to call uniquely their own.

The whimsical sculpture is located at the Van Buren border station, where people enter or exit the United States, and is positioned to greet residents and visitors from the local highway. The sculpture includes instantly recognizable state emblems including: the moose itself, the black capped chickadee, the Maine coon cat, leaping salmon, moxie, whoopee pies, blueberry pie, wintergreen, and pinecone, among others. Its bronze base also contains official Maine state emblems.”

Ralph Helmick

The submission refers to this artwork as “whimsical”, which it may be.

“Subversive” might be more accurate, although it really isn’t.

What we’re looking at here is an unlikely alliance of high conceptualism and the most conservative sculptural language.

So much public artwork is crushingly literal.

And with this piece one can imagine the “user group” meetings with lists of suggestions.

Here Katchadourian, instead of being limited by clichés, surfs them.

She performs a sort of esthetic jujitsu.

And the result is very strange, accessible, tender and funny.

Humor, you will notice, is extremely difficult to pull off in art, especially in public art. What we see here isn't irony, it isn't sarcasm.

This is postmodernism with heart.

Katchadourian is one of several apparently well-known artists of whom I was previously unaware.

Grand State of Maine is an encouraging example of an artist from the "regular" art world immersing herself in the challenges of our field.

How can we encourage more?

Janet Zweig

Again, it's exciting to see an artist like Katchadourian with a significant reputation in the art world venture into government-funded public art. I'm pretty sure the joke is on us with this crazy collection of public art clichés, but the piece is so over the top that I can't help but like it.

Cath Brunner

And maybe Janet is right. Maybe the joke is on us – or even about us. Maybe like Komar and Melamid's *People's Choice* series, this artwork delivers the most wanted images of the Mainers – or the "Stakeholders" — or the "Art Committee". Maybe it serves as conceptual and conscious illustration of "art by committee" — the looming fear of many artists embarking on a career in public art. Maybe it's just a visual manifestation of extreme boosterism —like those hysterical "welcome to ..." billboards, or souvenir state collector plates. I don't know. But I wonder. And that's why I think it's brilliant. In my CAFE first round comments – before we had any discussion – I wrote "would love this piece if it didn't take itself so seriously." I then I realized maybe it doesn't. And maybe I should.

28

James Turrell

The Color Inside

The University of Texas Austin

\$612,000 permanent

"The Color Inside is the 84th Skyspace created by James Turrell and one of twelve open to the public in the United States. The project is located on the rooftop deck of the Student Activity Center on The University of Texas at Austin campus. Landmarks, the University's ambitious public art program, commissioned the Skyspace in response to students' desires for a place where they could relax and escape the academic rigors of college life. Located in a building where students, staff, and members of the campus community study, eat and socialize, the Skyspace is a unique and accessible work of contemporary art.

While many visitors are familiar with James Turrell and come specifically to see the Skyspace, others just stumble across this unexpected gem.

Sunrise and sunset are particularly exciting times to visit, although it can be enjoyed at any time and on repeated viewings as changes in season and weather provide varied experiences."

Ralph Helmick

Skyspaces are everywhere. Please, please keep adding them.

Every neighborhood in the world should have one.

The cosmic ambitions of the Skyspaces are a rarity in our culture.

They physically and optically connect the terrestrial and the celestial.

I don't like the LED's, which I don't recall being part of the ones I've visited elsewhere.

The design's trans-technological foundation is better without them.

Lucky students there at UT.

Janet Zweig

I love James Turrell's Skyspaces. Who can argue with them? But my only qualm about this selection is to invoke a term that I learned from Cath Brunner – "catalogue shopping." In other words, "We want one of those too." Then you get one of those too, and you are just one of many.

29

(WILD CARD)

Kurt Gohde and Kremena Todorova

The Lexington Tattoo Project

Lexington, KY

Self-commissioned and funded by private individuals, foundations and organizations

\$15,000 permanent

"The Lexington Tattoo Project is a public artwork that intertwines poetry, tattoos, photography, and music as a way to simultaneously convey and foster love of place: a shared commitment to Lexington, Kentucky. Because there are now more than 250 people in Lexington who have permanent tattoos, many of them in visible places, the Lexington Tattoo Project is also a living artwork that continually fosters dialog across categories of identity, such as gender, race, age, and class. When the project participants leave Lexington, both the overall artwork and the conversations it spurs travel with them. In this way, the Lexington Tattoo Project is uniquely situated in space, while also being extremely dynamic. Because tattoos are privately owned, this is an artwork that is maintained by every single participant."

Janet Zweig

This is a project that caused a lot of discussion among the jurors, but not for the obvious reasons. It was noted that a well-known writer, Shelly Jackson, had done a similar project titled *Skin* where she invited people from around the world to have one word of her story tattooed on their skin. Unlike *The Lexington Tattoo Project*, only the participants would ever receive her story in its entirety. After much discussion, I chose this piece as my Wild Card because I think it does something very different than the Jackson piece. It's local and it's about place. The poem is about the city; the participants collectively make up the text of the place; and the piece itself is very public. And the other reason it is my Wild Card is that it demonstrates thinking outside of the box when considering the meaning of "permanent" in public art practice.

30

Peter Reiquam

Nine Lives

Fire Station #9 (Fremont)

Seattle, WA

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture with Dept. of Finance and Administrative Services Fire Facilities and Emergency Response Levy 1% for Art Fund

\$90,000 permanent

Cath Brunner

Fire Station 9 is in Seattle's Fremont neighborhood – the self proclaimed "Center of the Universe." This is a neighborhood with a home-grown art collection that ranges from a life size bronze statue of Lenin to a 1950s cold war era rocket to the Fremont Troll -a colossal giant clutching a real VW bug who resides under the Aurora bridge. And now into this eclectic and wondrous mix leaps a black cat. Created by artist Peter Reiquam, "Nine Lives" is inspired by the Eveready Cat ® icon – a logo self-selected as both motto and mascot by the firefighters of Fire Station # 9.

According to the application description, *"The colossal cat perches at the roof's edge as if he is about to leap to the ground to join his crew on their next life-saving mission."*

In the hands of a lesser artist, the Eveready Cat ® might have been rendered as a cut-out badge or patch, or maybe a sculpture mounted on a concrete plinth in the "plaza entry." But Reiquam creates the

cat as a full, 3D cartoon character and places it at the edge of the roovescape. This is an artwork that beautifully integrates into its quirky neighborhood context, civic architecture and the tight knit unit of firefighters at Fire Station #9.

31

Adam Kuby

Breaker

Weatherwax Park

Aberdeen, WA

4Culture (commissioning agency)

\$115,000 permanent

“Comprised of 309 salvaged sandstone blocks, Breaker is a new landmark for the coastal city of Aberdeen, WA sited along its busiest thoroughfare. The blocks were originally part of Aberdeen’s historic Weatherwax High School. When the school burned down in 2002, the city saved the stones, a good move, because ultimately Adam Kuby reimagined the salvaged stones into a cresting ocean wave.

Breaker is an earthwork, a site-specific sculpture and an illuminated night-time icon that speaks to Aberdeen’s coastal geography.

Over 4 million motorists pass through Aberdeen annually, largely en route to the coast.

Despite tough economic times, the City and Grays Harbor Community Foundation invested in Kuby’s work, resulting in a sculpture that celebrates the town’s past, revitalizes a major arterial route, and provides a cornerstone for future urban renewal.”

Ralph Helmick

This is elegant, inventive, civic recycling.

And one senses an unusually strong bond with the community.

From the ashes of Weatherwax High School arises something beautiful.

The corbels at the wave crest are kind of inevitable, but just right.

I even like the blue LED’s, which appear to be used with an all too rare restraint.

32

(LOVE LETTER)

Improv Everywhere

Grand Central Lights

Grand Central Terminal Main Concourse

New York, NY

MTA Arts for Transit & Urban Design

\$7,000 temporary

“To celebrate the 100th birthday of Grand Central Terminal, Arts for Transit commissioned Improv Everywhere and a group of 135 performers to surprise travelers on February 1, 2013, the official Centennial of the building.

Equipped with flashlights and cameras, the group illuminated the grand windows on the West façade of the historic Terminal building with simple impactful choreography. The surprise performance engaged thousands of passersby on the Main Concourse with a luminous shower of light, creating a carnival atmosphere in the city’s historic indoor town square. The spectacle was filmed by a 5-camera team and a YouTube video was produced generating over one million viewings in the first week, sharing the celebration around the world.

Grand Central Lights highlights the historic and iconic architecture of a beloved landmark while marking its centennial with a contemporary, performance-based intervention, bringing delight and spontaneity to one of the most storied public spaces in the nation.”

Janet Zweig

Improv Everywhere was created in 2001 by Charlie Todd, and has executed over 100 missions involving tens of thousands of “undercover agents.” Their motto is “We cause scenes,” and the stated goal of these missions is to cause scenes of “chaos and joy.” This project in Grand Central was a typically chaotic and

joyful experience for the many viewers, both in person and on the internet. It is decidedly low-tech, with the actors using only flashlights and camera flashes, showing that talent trumps technology when it comes to spectacle. Also, the fact that this space behind the windows could be activated was a big part of the surprise.

Cath Brunner

An overwhelming number of the YIR applications from 2013 offered projects that flashed, twinkled, pulsed or glowed. And yet, supplied with only LED flashlights and cameras with flash, 135 performers blew the doors off of all of those projects with invention, surprise, charm and generosity. For me it's also worth considering this project in juxtaposition with the Nick Cave *Heard•New York* piece – also featured at Grand Central Terminal and also selected for inclusion in YIR. *Heard•New York* is art in public places – a performance staged in a highly public place albeit beautifully done and with world-class artists. Improv Everywhere's *Grand Central Lights* practices –in the words of my friends Jack Mackie and Mark Spitzer – the art of making places public.

Ralph Helmick

Spectacle should always have a place in public art.
And one of my favorite realms is the gentle spectacle.
This piece exemplifies that subset of public art.

33

Jorge Pardo

Streetcar Stop for Portland

Portland, OR

Regional Arts & Culture Council

\$500,000 permanent

“Streetcar Stop for Portland is a sculpture that includes both shelter and lighting components.

The eccentric multifaceted structure includes over 300 individual panels in shades of gray and brown on the exterior, with warm hues of orange and yellow on the interior, sheltering streetcar passengers in a highly visible and fantastically colorful way.

Artist Jorge Pardo wanted to create an effect of being “rainy on the outside, sunny on the inside” for Portland’s Streetcar riders.

The inspiration for the exterior palette derives from an evening photograph Pardo took that was then simplified and mapped onto the surfaces.

He intended the piece to be best when it is dark and rainy and the interior lighting creates a warm glow that stands out like a beacon amongst its dark surroundings.”

Ralph Helmick

It's not easy to say why I chose this.

Its lantern quality.

Its weirdness.

Its awkward beauty.

We all know that the essential, most important quality of an artwork defies description. It's ineffable.

This piece has a quality...

Cath Brunner

This is not an instance of applying imagery onto an existing system-designed trolley shelter – and we saw many examples of that kind of work. This is an ambitious opportunity for an artist to create an entire idiosyncratic and wonderful structure and place – unlike any other.

Shout out to Kristin Calhoun, Public Art Manager, Regional Arts & Culture Council.

34

Elizabeth Gahan

Chromatic Crystallization (Seattle)

Westlake Park

Seattle, WA

Seattle Office of Arts & Culture with Seattle Parks and Recreation 1% for Art funds

\$10,000 temporary

“Made for Westlake Park in downtown Seattle, the artwork was designed to fit on artist Robert Maki and landscape architect Robert Hannah’s (1988) permanent stage and arch located at the park’s northwest corner. Gahan’s urban variety of cave crystals appear to grow and thrive on the existing stone structure, activating the space with an unexpected visual experience and making the arch more vibrant. Westlake Park, a bustling urban ecosystem in downtown Seattle, offers an ideal context for a “synthetic growth” inspired by forms in nature but constructed with materials from our urban environment. Local youth took a caretaker role, protecting the work against defacement or graffiti during less-trafficked park hours. The piece became a backdrop for all events at the park...”

Janet Zweig

There’s something exciting and surprising about this crazy asymmetrical parasitic folded crystal springing up temporarily on the existing sedate symmetrical architecture. Imagine how different – even impossible – this would be if it had been permanent instead of temporary. I think it really makes a case for temporary public sculpture.

35

(WILD CARD)

Jaume Plensa

Wonderland

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

EnCana Corporation (commissioning agency)

\$4,000,000 permanent

“Wonderland is the portrait of a young girl who lives in the artist’s native Barcelona. Depicting only her head, the portrait represents humanity as well as our human potential created and fostered by our dreams. The transparent mesh creates a visual bridge between Wonderland and THE BOW, a Calgary skyscraper, as Plensa strives to link together art, architecture and society. Contrary to its commanding size, the sculpture’s transparency creates an ethereal sense of fragility, mirroring and celebrating the fragility of human beings. People are encouraged to enter the sculpture through openings on either side of the head, an invitation for visitors to physically experience Plensa’s metaphor of the mind being the sanctuary for dreams.”

Ralph Helmick

It’s time this under-recognized artist got some attention...

What can we say about *Wonderland*, which doesn’t share a lot with our other choices?

It’s situated on a corporate plaza.

It was commissioned with private funds, not public money.

Plensa has similar work elsewhere. All around the globe.

It cost \$4 million.

It’s 4 stories tall, so how much did you think it would cost?

It’s also a completely great sculpture.

You know what we’re looking at? Plop art.

It’s not really plop art because that term is used exclusively as a negative.

But this transcendent piece could be anywhere.

Site specificity is, and maybe should be, always in play.

But please let’s note that many of our most successful and iconic national public artworks do not arise from a site. They make the site.

Placemaking is one of this conference's themes. Isn't it always?

How about this?

Artwork inverting the usual placemaker/place dynamic.

Think about it.

Anish Kapoor's *Cloudgate* could be in any urban setting. Now it's synonymous with Chicago.

Eero Saarinen's *Gateway Arch* could be anywhere.

Its image instantly evokes St. Louis. Yeah, I know what some will say about the nearby Mississippi and westward expansion.

This icon could work absolutely anywhere.

If something's truly excellent, truly magnificent, mythology attaches to it.

And the artwork will seem inevitable in its setting.

36

LA Commons and Rosten Woo

Project Willowbrook: Cultivating a Healthy Community through Arts and Culture

Los Angeles, CA

Los Angeles County Arts Commission

\$211,118 temporary

"Project Willowbrook models a dynamic new approach to artist-driven asset mapping and public engagement in civic planning for the South LA unincorporated area of Willowbrook, NW of Compton and just south of Watts, a neighborhood in the midst of an urban transformation. Funded by the NEA's Our Town grant, Project Willowbrook utilized socially engaged art practice and a series of engagement interventions including a temporary billboard, voicemail and text message system, an interactive survey in a zine-like format followed by a data visualization of results, a 125 page book highlighting the traditions and creative practices of the Willowbrook community and a community festival, "Celebrate Willowbrook" featuring local talent as well as a Home, Garden and Vehicle tour."

Cath Brunner

This is a somewhat new way of working. The NEA Our Town programmatic structure provided the funding and support for LA Commons and artist Rosten Woo to employ creative visioning tools that will inform LA County's short and long term capital and community projects in the neighborhood. For decades, outsiders defined the South LA area of Willowbrook with what it lacked. And, there certainly are undeniable challenges including socio-economic inequities, a significant demographic shift and cultural division, limited access to health care and gang violence. But *Project Willowbrook's* ambitious and tenacious promotion of the creative energies of this neighborhood along with Woo's artistic invitations, gave these "Proud Willowbrookians" a reason to come together and recognize the abundance in their community.

Ralph Helmick

This is clearly public art as social work, and it looks as though it's doing a fine job. Who can argue with it?

There are good, creative people involved, and the mission is admirable.

Again, for a while now our field has been characterized by an "expand to include" mentality. On the surface that's great.

But I think there's a meaningful distinction between social practice and what I'll nostalgically call fine art.

Social practice art may have its place, but I've got a bias.

Public art should provide some form of profound esthetic engagement.

Some form of beauty. Not prettiness, beauty.

Project Willowbrook is forging civic connection.

Let's remember that esthetically excellent public art does that, too.

(LOVE LETTER)***Del Paso Words on Walls***

Artists: Hans Bennewitz, designer, Paco Marquez, poet, Benjamin Della Rosa, designer, Susan Kelly-DeWitt, poet, Laura Edmisten-Matranga, designer, Danny Romero, poet, Barbara Hennely, designer, Catherine French, poet, William Leung, designer, Tim Kahl, poet

Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission

\$12,500 temporary

"Words on Walls, unveiled in October, 2013, was created to provide an opportunity for poets to create work in the public realm while reinforcing a local business area's mission and aspiration to become Sacramento's primary design district. Five poets were commissioned to write site-specific poems, which were translated by graphic designers into visual compositions that were painted on the walls of local businesses along the main street of the district – on Del Paso Blvd, between Arden & El Camino. The goal of the project was to encourage poets to engage in making art in the public realm and to showcase local graphic designers. It was also created to realize the goals and vision for creating a district for design and a distinct destination neighborhood. The result is five site-specific artworks that poetically reveal the essence of this eclectic, interesting, rough and economically depressed Sacramento neighborhood."

Janet Zweig

One unique part of this project is that the administrator used the art to address the client's stated goal in a really elegant way. That goal was to try to begin to make a rough area in downtown Sacramento into a design district.

Another unique move was pairing poets and graphic designers. In general, I think it's a great strategy to use a designer when a designer is right for a project instead of giving an artist a designer's job, as too often happens. And interestingly, the sum of the parts in this case is an innovative work of art. Along the same lines, it was brilliant to use poets to write site-specific texts instead of relying on found quotations.

And there's an honesty to the project: the poems don't put a pretty face on the district – they directly address the layered and gritty nature of the area.

Ralph Helmick

I spoke about text earlier, and its limitations.

But with this project we've got visual poetry.

The graphic designers were allowed to be graphic designers.

The poets were allowed to be poets, albeit of a "site specific" variety.

(Are poets ever really NOT site-specific?)

These shotgun marriages work brilliantly.

Cath Brunner

This project revealed, in an immediate way, the emotional psyche of the Del Paso area. I feel the pain and fear of economic uncertainty or downright catastrophe, in truly powerful and searing words like "In scarcity we bare the teeth." But I also feel the high hopes and aspirations. I am awed by the local creativity – what a remarkable asset — and I have no doubt that this Sacramento community can and will "resurrect what others throw away."

In closing – a poem by Danny Romero that sums up what we have been thinking about as we assembled this Year in Review and reflected on our work and practice:

" She speaks to me about the mud dauber wasp, reciting all that she learned from Encyclopedia Britannica 1970, the way it flies across the patio, moving bits of earth larger than one would imagine. She watches it build a nest beneath the eaves, a thing of beauty shining in her eyes."

Acknowledge Shelly Willis – remarkable curator and all round PA visionary