Sherry Kafka Wagner, 2005

It was a privilege to review slides of public art from around the nation; I am grateful for this opportunity. I realize that reviewing slides is not the same as viewing the work itself; still the images provided insights into the role of public art today. I was struck by many things: the wide acceptance and use of public art as an important component of the environment, by the variety of sites and venues, and by the varying scales and materials. It was fascinating to see the many different work approaches: team and individual; commissioned and non-commissioned; temporary, permanent, and restorative. In terms of the selection approach, I thought of it as exactly what the title says: A Review. This is definitely NOT a competition. It would be wonderful if we could show all the submitted slides. Since time will not permit, I selected slides that illustrate certain facets of public art, such as the collaborative aspects of problem-solving, integration/engagement with the context, public involvement. In addition, I chose slides that would illustrate the range of creative efforts and opportunities. In a democracy, the public realm is as important as the private in defining not only the communal aspects of our lives, but our individual identity. Art that can engage the attention and even the affection of citizens by providing sensory impact, cognitive complexity, and possibilities for discovery and involvement is vital to our lives.

Donald Lipski, 2005

What a joy, looking through the hundreds of slides of public art projects from the past year—a tremendous outpouring of creative energy, innovation, and public support. Though these projects arise out of a variety of concerns—addressing the community, enhancing the environment, providing amenities and so forth—I have approached them purely as art, as I would in a gallery or museum. My choices reflect a belief that art should inspire, elevate, surprise and delight. Most of my selections rise above a reflection of popular taste, and show a willingness, both of the artist and the funding agency to challenge the public, to offer them something truly transcendent.