



Seattle Arts Commission
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE "1% FOR ART" ORDINANCE IN THE CITY OF SEATTLE

The art ordinance in Seattle was passed by the City Council with the express purpose of expanding the City's experience of the visual arts and of encouraging artists capable of creating art for public places. This commitment is a straightforward and basically simple one. Its implementation is more complex.

The ordinance provides that at least one percent of the budget requests for municipal construction projects in the Capital Improvement Program (where those projects are within the city limits) be set aside for the selection, acquisition and/or installation of works of art in public places on municipally owned property.

The information that follows is designed to summarize some of the requirements of the ordinance and to explain some of the administrative procedures that the City and the Seattle Arts Commission will follow--including a description of how and at what point artists become directly involved.

Seattle Arts Commission

The Seattle art ordinance gives the Seattle Arts Commission a very large share of the responsibility for its implementation. The responsibilities include working directly with City departments whose budgets contain the construction projects and therefore the art funds. The responsibilities also include establishing procedures for the selection of artists and making such selections; and determining, in many cases, the specific location, placement and amount of money to be spent on works of art.

The Commission has established a five-member "Art in Public Places Committee" whose primary responsibility is to make recommendations to the entire Commission regarding its duties as specified in the ordinance. The Committee is co-chaired by Morrie Alhadeff and Virginia Wright, and includes Norie Sato, Jacquetta Blanchett and Julie Anderson. Princess Jackson is employed by the Commission to provide the administrative staff support for the program.

Funds for Artwork

Funds for artwork within any given year are generated by construction projects planned and funded through individual City departments. The art ordinance directs departments to set aside, within these budgets, an amount for works of art equal to at least one percent of the total cost of the project. The City Council retains the right to make the final decision as to whether this amount shall indeed be included in the project budget. The Council has, however, passed a resolution strongly stating their commitment to the purposes of the ordinance.

Funds for City construction projects come from many sources. Some funds are generated directly by the City of Seattle, through property taxes, license fees and utility revenues--water, light, sewer, etc. Any project supported by these funds must follow the requirements of the art ordinance. However, funds for many (or, even most) City construction projects come from other sources, such as bond issues or state and federal matching grants. These funds often have legal restrictions on their use which either preclude an art budget, or at least make it necessary to prove the appropriateness of artwork in each specific project, on a case by case basis. These restrictions are effective now even though the Seattle art ordinance was passed in June, 1973.

In the case of a bond issue, like the Forward Thrust Bond Resolution passed in 1968, the voters gave permission to use the funds raised for very specific purposes, and unless allowance for art expenditures was made at the time of passage, they can't be added later. (There is strongly stated concern for beautification and aesthetics in the Forward Thrust Parks Resolution which supports the inclusion of artwork in those projects.)

In a similar way, unless a grant request to state and federal funding agencies initially includes an art budget, it is very difficult to change the specified use of the grant funds and include an art budget later. Even though we will be arguing for the inclusion of art in as many projects as possible, there is a real need to make sure that future bond issues and grant requests include an amount for art.

Seattle City Departments

Almost all City departments have construction projects at one time or another, but we, obviously, will be working primarily with those departments undertaking the most construction: City Light, the Water Department, the Department of Parks and Recreation, the Engineering Department (sewer, transportation) and the Building Department.

City departments are developing methods to ensure that the Seattle Arts Commission is regularly informed of proposed construction projects, and of their sources of funding. This is handled in various ways depending on the procedures of the particular department. City departments are required to send to the Arts Commission copies of departmental appropriation requests. (requests made to City Council asking permission to spend money on construction projects.) In some cases a regular report is sent to the Commission by the department.

Once the eligibility of specific funds has been determined, the department and the Arts Commission have two options:

- 1) They can decide to spend the art funds generated by a particular construction project on a work of art for that project. For example, if the Water Department undertook the construction of a new building, the art budget might be spent on a work of art for the courtyard of that building.
- 2) A department can also decide to set aside art funds from specific projects, letting them accumulate in a special departmental arts account. This can be a special advantage where the construction budget is small or where the project doesn't lend itself to the addition of artwork. An example of this is sewer replacement projects in the Engineering Department--small projects under the streets scattered around the city.

The art ordinance provides for the establishment of a Municipal Arts Fund. At the time the ordinance was written, it was felt that this fund could be used as a general account for the collection of art funds from all departments. Due primarily to legal restrictions, the funds will generally remain within each individual department. Each department, essentially, will have its own "Art Fund", which will collect the art monies as they accumulate. The funds in these accounts can then be used for artwork to be placed on any municipal property, generally on property under the jurisdiction of the department involved. In most instances, these funds can be carried over from one year to the next.

Funds generated by the "1% for Art" ordinance cannot be used for ongoing operation or maintenance of artwork acquired. Since these expenses will be incorporated into the annual budget of a city department, the head of that department must approve any artwork requiring extraordinary operation or maintenance expenses. The department will provide assistance in developing guidelines for maintenance limitations in the definition of specific art projects.

Expenses related to the artwork are paid by the department, but must have the approval of the Seattle Arts Commission. These expenses, covered by the "1% for Art" funds, include the purchase of artwork, commissioning of artists by contract, installation and site preparation, jury and administration costs.

Definition of Art Projects/Procedures for Artist Selection

The Seattle Arts Commission has established and approved a set of "Procedures for Selecting Artwork within Municipal Projects." These are available at the Commission office. The following is a summary of the way these procedures are put into effect.

Once a department has funds available for artwork, a specific art project must be defined. In this definition, the Art in Public Places Committee of the Seattle Arts Commission works closely with representatives of the

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department. They also rely on the advice of representatives of the Seattle Design Commission, the Board of Public Works, and, if the artwork is to be part of a construction project, the architect of that project. (This group is called the "Standing Committee" of representatives in the Commission's procedures.)

The location of the artwork must be determined both in terms of the general municipal facility and the specific site within that facility. Specifications for the desired artwork must be defined, such as medium (painting, sculpture, prints, electronics, etc.), size restrictions, and maintenance limitations. An appropriate budget amount must be agreed upon, including a general breakdown as to its use--i.e. amount for the artwork, and amount for the necessary supportive activities.

It must be determined whether completed artwork will be purchased directly, or whether work will be commissioned, and whether the method for selecting an artist will be 1) an open competition, 2) a limited competition, or 3) direct selection. The "Standing Committee" must also decide whether or not the project should be limited to Washington State artists--the procedures state that "at least 50% of the artists selected must be residents of the State of Washington." (A definition of residency is included in the procedures.)

If the artwork is to be part of a construction project, the Standing Committee must determine at what point in the design process to involve the artist. The Seattle Arts Commission is committed, through its "Procedures," to involving the artist as early as possible.

The Standing Committee shall also recommend a jury--its size (between one and five members) and its composition. The only requirement in terms of jury composition is that at least one member of the jury be an artist. The jury will often be given some responsibility in the definition of the project, for instance in the selection of the proper medium. The jury's decision shall be considered final, with the Department head's veto being limited to "proven technical infeasibility."

A project prospectus or program is drawn up on the basis of the above considerations. This program requires the approval of both the Department head and the Seattle Arts Commission. The Board of Public Works requires the department to advertise for one day in a major Seattle paper. The Arts Commission will publish a notice in The Arts. The Arts Commission will also send press releases to all major publications in the area, and will be responsible for individual mailings to all artists registered as being interested in participating in "1% for Art" projects.

Responsibilities of Interested Artists/Archives of Northwest Artists

The Seattle Arts Commission is extremely interested in guaranteeing that any interested artist will be considered for each project. An important aspect of making this possible is the establishment of an information resource available to the jury and including slides and photographs of work and biographical material about each artist. A permanent resource

of this kind is definitely preferable to requesting submission of this information on a project-by-project basis.

The Henry Gallery at the University of Washington is building the Archives of Northwest Artists. To avoid duplicating this effort, the Seattle Arts Commission is purchasing services from the Henry Gallery in the creation and maintenance of a program within the archives to service our "1% for Art" program. This will make it possible to guarantee that the necessary information about interested artists is readily available.

Any artist interested in participating in future "1% for Art" projects with the City of Seattle should notify the Seattle Arts Commission through the Director of Art in Public Places by mail (305 Harrison). The notification should include name, address, phone number and a very brief indication of media used. This puts the artist on the Commission's mailing list and establishes direct contact between the artist and the Commission which administers the program. Slides, photographs and biographical materials should be sent to the Henry Gallery Archives. Instructions indicating kinds of information requested and preferred methods for labeling slides is attached. Questions regarding Seattle's "1% for Art" program should be directed to the Commission's Director of Art in Public Places, not the Henry Gallery.

In order to guarantee that the most recent work is considered, the artist should periodically update the materials at the Henry Gallery. Although the Commission will periodically send out a reminder, this updating is the responsibility of the artist. The Henry Gallery has established a cross-referencing system, making it possible for "1% for Art" juries to have access to additional information on interested artists already on file in the archives. A similar system makes it possible for artists interested in the "1% for Art" to be considered by other users of the archives--i.e. architects, reviewers and critics, other arts commission, etc.

This accumulated resource at the Henry Gallery will be an important part of all methods for selecting artists. In the case of an open competition, artists will be asked to submit a specific proposal according to publicized guidelines; the information in the archives will be used by the jury to provide supporting information such as previous work and experience. In the case of both a limited competition and the direct selection or purchase, the jury will base their selection in part on a review of the information on all interested artists in the archives.

As previously indicated, interested artists will be notified prior to any "1% for Art" project, regardless of the particular selection procedures used. This will allow updating of archives information before each project if the artist considers this necessary.

It should also be noted that the archives described above include solely Northwest artists, and when a project allows consideration of artists in other parts of the country, other resources must be used.

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Procedures Following the Selection of an Artist

The Seattle Arts Commission recognizes that even after funds have been identified, an art project defined and an artist selected, the program will have only begun. Where work is to be commissioned, contracts must be written-- contracts requiring the signatures of the artist, the head of the department involved, and the director of the Seattle Arts Commission. Project schedules will be developed and must be met. Questions concerning rights to work (ownership, reproduction rights, etc.) must be defined and answered.

The Seattle Arts Commission has had very little experience, so far, in moving through these areas with specific projects. Although we can anticipate some of the needs and problems, we know that our knowledge and understanding will greatly increase as we undertake each individual project.

This summary of the implementation of the Seattle "1% for Art" ordinance will continually be revised and expanded.

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