

# Public Art Project in Iowa City, The Committee and the Results

## The Committee, structure and accountability

The Public Art Advisory committee developed the policies and procedures for the commissioning, procurement, maintenance, and deaccessioning of public art in 1998. These specific procedures govern the process by which the Public Art Advisory Committee makes decisions.

### Site Selection

The site must be public property (which may also include University of Iowa, state, county, or federal property), situated so that the art is visible and accessible to all members of the community. Additionally, the artwork must not seriously disrupt the flow of pedestrian or vehicular traffic or adversely alter the environmental conditions of the selected site. Structural and maintenance issues of the prospective artwork will also be considered when selecting a site, as some areas will be prone to public interactions with the art. A work installed in these areas must be structurally sound to ensure the safety of the community as well as the longevity of the work. Furthermore, some sites may be more appropriate than others due to activities on or near the site.

### Accession

All works of art purchased, commissioned or accepted as donations become property of the City of Iowa City. All City artwork is maintained by the City and included in an inventory kept by the City's Public Art Advisory Committee. All contracts for the acquisition of public art shall include provision for a reasonable time period within which the City agrees to keep the piece of artwork in the place for which it was commissioned, purchased or donated. This provision shall allow for removal or relocation of the artwork in the event the City Council determines that the place is needed for another public use.

People wishing to donate artwork to the City of Iowa City must submit slides, a written description of the work, and a rationale for the gift. The Advisory Committee will review the submitted piece for quality, maintenance requirements, donor stipulations, safety issues of the piece, availability of an appropriate site, and advice of the administrators at that site. Based on this review the Public Art Advisory Committee will either accept or decline the donation.

### Selection Processes

There are three standard ways of purchasing a piece of art. In addition to these, the City may acquire artwork through gifts. For each of the processes outlined, the Iowa City Public Art Program Acquisition Procedures will be used.

**Open Competition:** Artists submit proposals in response to a public advertisement. The selection committee then reviews the proposals and recommends an artist or artists for acquisitions or requests more detailed proposals from selected artists.

**Limited, Invitational Competition:** The Public Art Committee recommends a limited number of artists on the basis of an interview or review of work. The artists are then invited to develop a site-specific proposal for a particular project. The artists are given an honorarium and all the necessary information, as in the "Open Competition," as well as the opportunity to present a model and proposal to the committee. The selection committee then reviews the submitted proposals and recommends acquisitions. This process might be most appropriate for art projects calling for collaboration between an artist and an architect or landscape artist.

**Direct Invitation:** In this process, if there is a majority of the Public Art Advisory Committee that feels one artist is particularly well qualified for a project s/he might be invited to submit a proposal and a model thereby bypassing the competition process. This process may be suitable should the appropriate situation arise.

### Acquisition Procedures

1. Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) defines the project, i.e. location of work or capital project with which art is associated, and the method of selection. Methods of selection may include open competition; invitational competition; or direct selection.
2. PAAC defines parameters of project to be used in the call for artists or direct selection, develops a budget for the project, and drafts a proposed call for artists or artist's selection for City Council approval. Public comment will be invited before the PAAC. For direct selection, proceed to step #8.
3. City Council considers proposal.
4. PAAC determines need for panel to work on selection process for project and identifies participants. Panels will include members of the PAAC, design professionals, and representatives of the user group/neighborhood.
5. PAAC reviews initial submittals, which include the artist's experience and qualifications, references, and preliminary proposal(s) for the project or specific works of art, to determine compliance with the call for artists.

6. The panel, if convened by the PAAC, selects two or three semi-finalists from the group of qualified artists submitted to the panel by the PAAC. The semi-finalists may be asked to submit refined proposal(s). Semi-finalists may be paid a fixed honorarium, costs of travel and a per diem, depending upon the approved budget.
7. The PAAC reviews the submittals of the two to three semi finalists. The artist(s) may present their work at a public meeting. The artists' work is displayed in a public place for up to one week. Written comments from the public will be invited during this week. A public forum is held for discussion and input to the Public Art Advisory Committee on selection of the preferred artist. The PAAC recommends the finalist to the City Council.
8. City Council approves or denies the selection. Denial requires direction to the PAAC from the City Council and beginning the process again at the appropriate step.
9. After an affirmative vote by the Council, the PAAC works with selected artist on refinement of concept, timeframe for completion of work, final budget, and approves the contract for work.
10. The PAAC recommends contract to City Council
11. City Council approves contract.

## **Maintenance**

Before a work is accepted into the City's collection, the artist must submit:

- a detailed list of exact types, brands, and colors of materials used
- a summary of cleaning instructions
- estimated annual maintenance needs and costs in dollars

This information will be kept on file with the inventory of the City's collection. Any maintenance or restoration responsibilities that the artist might have must be clearly explained in the contract and agreed upon before the work becomes a part of the City's collection. A maintenance and inspection schedule suitable for the site and the work will be discussed with the artist and implemented upon possession of the work. Complete records of inspections, cleanings, and conditions of the works will be kept on file in the inventory. If a work in the City's possession becomes damaged in any way, the City may contact the artist to see if s/he can make the necessary repairs, or contact the necessary agencies or conservators to repair the work.

## **Decision/Relocation**

After due consideration, the PAAC may recommend and the City Council may authorized the removal of a work from the City of Iowa City's Public Art collection. It is Iowa City's policy to remove a piece only if one or more of the following situations exist:

- The artwork in its present state poses a safety hazard to the public or the environment.
- Restoration of the work aesthetically and/or structurally is not feasible, or the expense of such restoration would be disproportionate to the value of the work
- The architectural support (building, wall, and streetscape) is to be destroyed if relocation of the work is not feasible.
- Prolonged protest of the work persists to the extent that the work detracts rather than enhances the site and the community
- The work acts as an encumbrance to the use of public property
- The public use of the site has changed or is proposed to change in a manner that is no longer compatible with the artwork.

If a work is to be moved/modified, the artist must be notified before the change, if at all possible. In the instance that a work must be removed from the City's collection, the artist must be notified and given the opportunity to purchase the art from the City. In all situations, the rights of the artist will be respected as defined in the Visual Artists Rights Act of 1990, unless waived by the artist.

## **Financial Donations**

The City of Iowa City welcomes any financial donations to the Iowa City Public Art Program. Donations are tax deductible and can be specified for a specific project or added to the public art fund.

## **Community Initiated Public Art**

The Iowa City Public Art program was created in 1997 to enhance the appearance of the city through the selection and integration of art in the public environment. Although most artwork purchased and installed by the Iowa City Public Art Program has been initiated by the Public Art Advisory Committee, it is possible for members of the community to come forth with beneficial ideas that merit consideration for possible funding/support.

The **Community Initiated Public Art Application** should be completed and submitted with proposals to the Iowa City Public Art Advisory Committee for their review and possible recommendation to the City Council for final consideration.

The Iowa City Public Art Advisory Committee meets monthly, typically on the first Thursday at 3:30 PM in the Lobby Conference Room of the City Hall, 410 E. Washington St. Applications can be submitted to either Marcia Klingaman (356-5237) or Karin Franklin (356-5232) at the Iowa City Planning and Community Development Department on the Thursday before the PAAC meeting to be included on the agenda or the application can be submitted to the PAAC at their meeting during "Public Discussion of any item not on the agenda". Applications presented at "public discussion" cannot be officially discussed or acted upon by the Public Art Advisory Committee until the next meeting when it can be placed on the agenda.

## Selection Criteria

Artwork proposals will be reviewed by the Public Art Advisory Committee for recommendation to the Iowa City City Council. The Public Art Advisory Committee will evaluate the works of art based on the following criteria:

1. Verification that the artwork will be located on public property and be publicly accessible.
2. Ability of the artist/applicant to complete the project within the proposed timeframe and budget.
3. Commitment of proposed partners involved in the project. Application should include a clear explanation of the responsibilities of each entity involved in the project.
4. Ability/willingness of the artist/applicant to work with the PAAC / staff.
5. Ability of the applicant to provide funding (if proposed).
6. Verification that the completed and installed artwork will become the property of the Iowa City Public Art program.
7. Artwork meets design, safety and maintenance criteria, funding availability, and appropriateness of the artwork for the site and how well it "contributes to the identity and viability of the community and promotes the image of Iowa City".

## Submittal Requirements

- A site plan with building and grade elevation and building facades, showing the placement of the proposed artwork within the site proposed.
- A narrative statement to demonstrate that the artwork will be displayed in an area open and freely available to the general public.
- A narrative of the artist's concept.
- Evidence of the value of the proposed artwork.
- Maintenance requirements.
- Visual representations of the artwork will be submitted in one of the following formats
  - 8"x 10" photographs or 35mm slides or digital photos on 3 1/2" floppy or CD depicting several views of the artwork;
  - A model of the artwork; or
  - A graphic or artist illustration depicting several views of the artwork.
- Budget detail

## Dedication of Public Art

From time to time there may be individuals to whom the dedication of a public art piece is warranted. Those individuals should be persons noted for their significant contribution to the culture of Iowa City.

**Public art pieces may be dedicated to an individual provided one of the following procedures is followed:**

- At the time the public art project is conceived by the Public Art Advisory Committee, dedication to an individual is made part of the project concept. The proposed concept is then subject to the approval of the City Council pursuant to the Acquisition Procedures included herein.
- An individual or group brings a proposal for dedication to an individual of an extant public art item or a proposed public art project to the Public Art Advisory Committee or the City Council. All proposals must be accompanied by credentials for the person to be honored relative to that person's contribution to the culture of Iowa City. All proposals must also include endorsements for the dedication from groups or individuals other than the proposer. Proposals will be considered by the Public Art Advisory Committee who will advise the City Council. The Council will make the final determination as to the appropriateness of the dedication.
- This policy shall not apply to donated works. For policies regarding donated works, see the Accession section of these rules.

## The Results

Thursday September 18, 2008, the City of Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department had a Public Art Dedication of "Dancing Water" a wall sculpture by BJ Katz. Ms. Katz specializes in designing artwork that integrates with the architecture of the buildings. Her cast glass artwork is entirely handmade from original molds and is hand-painted. She starts with plate glass, and then cuts it to size, allowing for the spread that inevitably happens when casting glass. The glass is then sent for tempering; a process that strengthens the glass by four to five times and meets architectural safety requirements. When the glass came back to the studio from tempering it was hand-painted with reflective chrome paint.

The decision to place it in the pool area was two fold, 1) to enhance the beauty of the swimming area and 2) to use this as a showpiece for the traffic that passes by on one of Iowa City's busiest streets and use as a nightlight for the building while showing it off.

It has received many comments, especially at night, for the attractiveness of the piece but also sparked some negative comments from folks that were disappointed that the public art money was not spent on a local artist. Then again, no local artists responded to the call. Overall it has received many good comments as it truly brought forth the mission of the city to enhance our artist base and bring culture to the community. Nine Iowa City parks/greenways now enjoy a public art component, with more in the works. To see all of our public art efforts visit the City's website at [www.icgov.org](http://www.icgov.org), go the A-Z index and click on Public Art.



Visit the Iowa City Park and Recreation Website at [www.icgov.org](http://www.icgov.org)