

PUBLIC ART COMMISSION MEETING

A special joint meeting of the Public Art Commission and Historical Commission took place on Wednesday, September 2, 2009, at 5:30 P.M. at the Cambridge Arts Council.

The following members were present:

Terri Hensick
Mags Harries
Cynthia Smith
Miriam Stewart
Julie Graham

Staff present:

Jeremy Gaucher, Public Art Administrator

1) General Comments

RE: Liam Gillick installation at the Main Brach Library

Mags Harries comments that she has just seen the installation and noticed that it was quite different than the last proposal she had seen. She asked if such a change shouldn't have been brought before the PAC.

2) "Anxiety of Beauty" Documentary Viewing (30 minutes)

The PAC viewed the documentary by Fred Woods.

PAC suggested a distribution plan for the film is needed and should include CAC website if possible, YouTube, Cambridge Public Television.

Cynthia suggested that perhaps some sort of film documentation could be made from Sharon Louden's still photographs.

Jeremy mentioned that Lillian is connecting Fred Woods and Kristof Wodiczko to possibly work on a documentary about the installation at the Police Station.

3) Discussion Regarding Possible Cambridge Street Corridor Project

As all members stated they are familiar with the corridor, the PAC declined to take a tour.

PAC discussed a couple of artists that came to mind: Clifford Selbert, who was once a Cambridge resident (now in LA), and David Phillips (see Steel Fish for Wholefoods).

PAC discussed having an "Ideas Competition", wherein a limit of 10 local artists would be commissioned (perhaps \$1000 per) to develop an idea, display all of the ideas in a gallery, and decide a 'finalist' from that process.

Further discussion led to the addition of a series of 'informational/educational meetings'/'public art class' for the selected artists around ideas of site visits (with a resident), and public issues (with a landscape architect, or other city official), conservation and maintenance (with Rika McNally). The proposal process would begin after this series of classes.

The “local” artist designation proposed to be one of the following: 60 mile radius, New England, or within the 128 circle. TBD

Further refined, the committee’s recommendation step-by-step as follows:

1. Open Call (to submit to Slideroom registry)
2. Select 3-5 artists/groups, \$1k stipend
3. Education Classes (mandatory)
4. Final Proposals submitted
5. CAC Gallery exhibition of proposals
6. Final Decision

The PAC was undecided on how to choose the 10 invited artists, whether it be a 3 person Jury or the PAC itself. Similarly with the Selection Committee, the PAC wasn’t sure what the make-up of that should be – proposed that perhaps it could be the ‘teachers/mentor’ for the education component.

Other idea: have this be a student class competition, inviting groups or individual students from Emerson, Mass Art, BU, BAC, Leslie, GSD, MIT to go through this process.

Follow-up by Mags Harries:

I want to clarify the reasons we discussed creating a new process for Cambridge Street. This was talked about as an opportunity for local artists who might be interested in public art that are not necessarily sculptors or have their images in our digital bank. This idea is not appropriate for artists who are veterans of public art.

The idea of meeting and discussing issues with city depts. and community people involved in the site was not so much a class as information that could clarify issues and make the selected ten (or less) understand the limitations and opportunities. The interested artists would be given \$1000 (\$1500) each, have their works on display at the gallery for public feedback but a jury would finally select a winner.

Do not get me wrong I think we have a fine system in Cambridge but we can and should explore other ways that we can perhaps surprise ourselves as to what is public art. It seemed that there was support in the committee to try this and it should be discussed further. We as committee members can guide the PAC.

4) Committee Members

Stan Trekker was recommended as a candidate for the PAC

Charlotte Cohen was recommended as a future Juror (by Mags)

5) Event Updates

Tues, Sept 8, 2pm: Boston Public Art Walk (Mayor’s office of Arts...)

Meet at Public Garden, RSVP to rsvp@cityofboston.gov

Wed, Sept 9, 11am: CAC only MIT Public Art Tour with Patricia Fuller

Meet at LIST, RSVP to Jeremy jgaucher@cambridgema.gov

Mon, Sept 14, 6-8pm: First Mondays @ CAC Gallery, Sound Off closing and Poet Populist reading

Fri, Sept 25, 6-8pm: West Cambridge Youth Center Dedication (Oatman installation open)

Wed, Oct 7, 5:30pm: PAC Meeting

6) Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 7:30 P.M.