

PORTLAND PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE 2001 ANNUAL REPORT

Since passage of the Percent for Art Ordinance in the spring of 2000 the Portland Public Art Committee has been laying the groundwork for implementing the Public Art Program. This background work has included:

- Getting the new committee appointed, orientated and operating;
- Writing procedures and guidelines for administrating the Public Art Program;
- Surveying the existing art under city ownership, determining which pieces should be included in the official City collection, and assessing the physical condition of those pieces; and
- Educating the public about the new ordinance and engaging the public regarding the potential directions for the future of public art in Portland.

Our goal has been to create an efficient, state-of the-art program that effectively preserves our existing public art collection and encourages the creation of new works of the highest quality.

Establishment of the Portland Public Art Committee

The ordinance structures the Public Art Committee to include 9 members appointed by Council: six citizen volunteers, one representative from the City Council, one representative from the Portland Arts and Cultural Alliance (PACA), and one appointment by the City Manager (see Attachment #1). Committee members serve for three-year appointments. Meeting times are publicly announced. The Council has made all appointments, and the Committee has effectively organized itself, elected officers, is holding regular public meetings, and accomplishing lots of work through a sub-committee structure.

Development of Guidelines for Administering the Public Art Program

The Ordinance requires that the Public Art Committee “establish such guidelines as are necessary to carry out the purpose of the ordinance ...”

The Committee has reviewed Guidelines from successful percent for art programs from across the country to draft Guidelines for Portland (see Attachment #2). The Guidelines include sections on the following:

- Review criteria for proposed gifts of art to the City;
- Guidelines for selecting artwork for the Public Art Program, and for selecting artists for commissioned artwork;
- Requirements for design documentation for review of artwork, and requirements for project records;
- Maintenance Policy;
- Guidelines for Relocation of artwork;
- Guidelines for deaccessioning artwork

Inventory of the City-owned Artwork:

Under the Ordinance, the Committee has responsibility for maintenance and care of the Portland Public Art Collection. In order to administer the Ordinance, the Committee has completed an inventory of artwork, or items that might be considered artwork, that are owned by the City. The Committee recommends that monuments not created by individual artists not qualify as public art under the definitions of the Ordinance, and therefore, not be included in the official Public Art Collection. The Committee also determined that works in the Portland Public Library and in city schools or on school grounds do not belong to the City but to the Portland Public Library and the Portland School Committee respectively. The Committee recommends that the Council designate 19 pieces of city-owned artwork as the official Portland Public Art Collection (see Attachment #3). The Committee will continue to include artwork owned privately and by other city organizations on walking tours of public art and in other educational and arts promotion activities; however, the Committee will not be responsible for their upkeep.

Assessment of Artwork

The Committee applied for and received a grant from Save Our Sculpture! - a Heritage Preservation program of the Smithsonian Institution, to assess the physical condition of 6 pieces in our public art collection (see Attachment #4). Those artworks are *Temperance*, *Thomas Bracket "Star" Reed*, the *Spanish Civil War Veterans Memorial*, *Michael* and *the Lobsterman*. A professional art conservator submitted detailed written assessments for those artworks with accompanying recommendations and cost estimates for repair and restoration.

Percent for Art Funding Recommendations

The 2000-01 C.I.P. Percent-for-Art allotment is \$53,000. The Committee recommends that the Council approve \$52,725 in bonding for the following:

- I. \$43,125 of the annual percent-for-art allocation for the FY 2000-2001 be used for the restoration of 4 of these pieces. These include:
 - *Spanish War Veterans Memorial* (\$13,200),
 - *Michael* (\$10,300),
 - *The Lobsterman* (\$10,800), and
 - *Temperance* (\$8,825).

The Parks Department has allocated money for restoration of "Tzar" Bracket Reed.

- II. \$2,000 for training Parks Department staff in proper maintenance of restored statues. This training will be conducted by the art conservator who is hired to restore the statues, and will be conducted while the conservator is here to do the restoration work.
- III. \$7,600 from the FY 2000-01 allocation be directed toward fabrication and installation of permanent cast bronze signage on all 19 objects in the Public Art Collection. Signage will provide uniform identification of all pieces of the Collection with title, date of installation, artist, and text that identifies the object as belonging to the Portland Public Art Collection.

The Committee believes that it is important and responsible to dedicate early expenditures to take care of our current collection through assessment, restoration, and identification.

A Year of Public Art

The Public Art Committee sponsored a major, yearlong event called “The Year of Public Art” to highlight the passage of the Ordinance, educate the community about the existing collection and stimulate public discussion about the potential for public art in Portland. The program involved the opening of 7 pieces of public art in the spring of 2000 and a 7-part lecture series in the fall, which was co-sponsored, by Greater Portland Landmarks, the Portland Public Library, and the Institute for Contemporary Art at MECA, the University of Southern Maine Art Galleries, and the Portland Museum of Art. Speakers came from local and regional programs. The events attracted large audiences and generated a list for a “Friends of Public Art.”

Outdoors Sculpture Guide

In collaboration with the Maine Arts Commission the Committee published a Guide to Maine Outdoor Sculpture, which will be available in major tourist venues throughout the city and state. It includes a pullout walking tour map of public art in downtown Portland. Five thousand maps of a Walking Tour of Public Art in Portland that were printed separately will be available at no cost to visitors and community members.

Art in the Parks

The Portland Public Art Committee collaborated with the Parks Department, and faculty from the Maine College of Art, and the Art Department of the University of Southern Maine to create a program to get temporary art installations into city parks. The program works with art student from MECA and USM to review art installation proposals and facilitate temporary installations. Last year, fourteen Maine College of Art students submitted projects to a review committee made up of delegates from each of the city’s open space committees, lead by a Portland Public Art Committee member and Parks staff. These projects were installed in sites around the city for a period of up to 6 weeks in the spring of 2000.

Other Initiatives

The Committee is currently working on several other initiatives to complete the groundwork for the startup phase of the Public Art Program. These initiatives include:

- Completing historical documentation of each of the pieces in the city’s collection.
- Conducting an inventory of the artwork owned by the city that is within buildings (paintings, drawings, photographs).
- Surveying potential locations within the City for new public art projects.
- Planning community meetings to solicit ideas and proposals for new public art projects.

The Portland Public Art Committee thanks the Council for their support and guidance with the Portland Public Art Program, and we welcome your ideas and involvement as we move forward.