FROM THE STUDIO TO PUBLIC SPACE
Some thoughts about public art

Why Public Art?
From the studio to the public: A few examples
How to use materials to your advantage
Finding and Responding to Projects
Some public art resources
Questions and Answers

Presented by
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Why Public Art?

• Enlivens our communities and public spaces
• Creates a sense of place, makes us unique
• Evokes wonder, makes us laugh
• Reflects our history, tells our story
• Increases our awareness of the world around us
• Engages us in dialogue
Art Encourages tourism; brings economic benefits to communities

Let’s go see ...
Have you heard about?

It’s a great space

Florentijn Hofman
*Rubber Duck*
*(travelled internationally)*

Louise Bourgeois, *Crouching Spider*
Temporary Installation sponsored by the San Francisco Arts Commission
Art Reflects and Celebrates Our Communities...

Sonia Romero
McArthur Park Metro Station, L.A
Art Makes Us Feel Welcome

Foon Sham
*The Glory of the Chinese Descendants*, 2000
Gallery Place-Chinatown Station
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority
Art tells our history
(for better or worse)

Ai Wei Wei on Alcatraz
“With Wind”
Commissioned by FOR-SITE Foundation in partnership with the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
Ai Wei Wei on Alcatraz
“Stay Tuned”
Commissioned by FOR-SITE Foundation in partnership with the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
Art makes our ride better

Michael Cooper, Flatrock Heritage Foundation
Art Surprises Us in Unexpected Places
Art Engages Us in Dialogue

What is it?
Who did this?
What does it mean?

Do we like this?

Zhang Huan, “Three Heads Six Arms”
Temporary Project Sponsored by the San Francisco Arts Commission
Studio Art Vs. Public Art

*It’s all about process*

- *From entering competitions* to working with communities, arts councils, other artists, bureaucrats, and sometimes naysayers

- *It’s about responding to site and place*, while maintaining your artistic integrity and trying to please a broad audience

- *It’s being expected to make your art last forever*, even in a public space
Philosopher’s Way McLaren Park

A case study of a project inspired by site and community

Project Goals:

• Respect the physical beauty and natural ecology of the park

• Be relevant to the diverse neighborhoods around the park

• Enhance the experience of the park; draw people in while maintaining its serenity, calmness and natural environment
Community Involvement in Selection Process

- Community meetings held to solicit park history, inspiration, “insider” information
- Community input and insight was reflected in RFQ
- Orientation at park for artists interested in applying to project
- Members of the community were on the selection panel
Finalist Proposals:

1. One free standing sculpture

2. One Sculptural Bench

3. A nearly 3 mile walking trail with two granite trail-head plaques, 61 granite trail markers; 15 scenic stops each marked with 13 viewing stations and two granite benches, (all with inlaid polished black granite panels etched with historical photos) and one spring water fountain bowl made of carved basalt.
COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE
RESPONDING TO PROPOSALS
(sample, but fairly typical)

Do you live or work in the neighborhood?

How often do you use the park? What are your favorite things about it?

How can art help to enrich our experience of the park?

What are the strengths of each proposal? What are their weaknesses?

How well do these artworks fit in to the setting and surrounding environment?

Do you feel that people of all ages and backgrounds will enjoy the proposed artwork?

Which project do you feel best meets the project goals, and why?

Do you have any comments/suggestions about the project or the proposals?
McLaren Park Proposal

“Philosopher’s Way”

Susan Schwartzenberg and Peter Richards
Historical narratives - Visitacion Valley

Hunters Point shipyard

Evolution of Cow Palace

Stories of San Bruno Mountain
There are those to whom place is unimportant,
But this place, where sea and fresh water meet,
Is important--

for I was here . . .
These are ancient meadows. Many of the grasses and flowers are descendents of plants that are centuries old.
Granite Photo Etched Viewing Station
At first I was skeptical. How could artists improve on the serene beauty of McLaren Park’s trails? Well they did. The unobtrusive stone markers feel as if they were always there. Coming upon one is like finding a friend.

Ed, park neighbor
Not all of the existing trails in the park were ADA compliant, but the art trails had to be
Making the Park Fun (and functional)

30 benches were made from recycled granite that came from the steps of San Francisco City Hall. The basalt urn catches water from a drinking fountain above it.
A New City Landmark

To this day volunteers continue to maintain the trails, lead guided tours, and consider Philosopher's Way a beloved city landmark.
De Fremery Pool, Oakland

Larry Sultan and Michael Mandel
Bob Zoell
Bob Zoell, Market Lofts, Los Angeles
Bob Zoell, SF Int’l Airport
Commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission
When a public art audience response to your work and your aesthetic, they will find a way to translate it.
Ron Moultrie Saunders
Bayview Library
“We like it cause it looks like us”
2 young ladies from the neighborhood
Michael Arcega
Valencia Street Posts
SF Arts Commission
Swimmer’s Waves, Catherine Wagner
Sava Pool, Commissioned by the SF Arts Commission
Lessons Learned

• Consider the place; how is it used and by whom?

• What are the community values, traditions, history of the place?

• Use your art to translate what you’ve learned about the site and community into a work that is relevant to those who will see/use/experience it

• Don’t “dumb” down: really meaningful art can withstand challenges

• Art can be translated to a variety of media and to any-scale: Porcelain enamel, glass, ceramic tile, aluminum are all good choices for public art. Get to know a variety of fabricators!
• When responding to an RFQ: **READ IT CAREFULLY!**  
  *(READ IT CAREFULLY TWICE, JUST TO BE SURE!)*

• Comply with what is requested. Do not include unsolicited materials: *they will not be reviewed*

• Adhere to the deadline

  *(note whether it is a postmark or desk deadline as well as the time zone!)*

• Attention to detail is **VERY** important. Proof all submitted materials.

• **DO NOT** layer or crowd your images; 5 carefully selected individual images of a work are better than an 3 images of it crowded into one slide
• Make sure your narrative contains information about your prior experience with projects of similar scope

• If you don’t have specific experience, partner with another artist, fabricator or designer. Include their qualifications in your application. If room allows, submit a letter from them agreeing to your partnership and conveying their interest in the project

• Convey your interest in the project: What excites you about it?

• How would you approach conceptualizing an art project in response to the site?

• How/Why is your work appropriate for the project?

• Use language and terminology that non-artists will understand. If an art term, material or technique is used, follow with a clear explanation (typically, the majority of selection panelists are not arts professionals)
Americans for the Arts: $50/year: E-mail List Serves for Public and Performing Arts, Job Opportunities, Conferences, Webinars.

Arts Commission/Council Websites and E Mail Lists
(San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda County, California Arts Council, LA Metro)

4 Culture, King County Washington

Call for Entry (CAFÉ)
Slide Room
Public Artist.Org
Sculpture Magazine
Public Art Review

Slide Registries (City, State, County)

Social Media, Twitter, Flickr, Instagram, Facebook

Lynn Basa: The Artist's Guide to Public Art: How to Find and Win Commissions

Barbara Goldstein: Public Art by the Book

Shelly Willis and Cameron Cartiere: The Practice of Public Art
Art Resources

METAL WORK

Nor Cal
1121 Third Street
Oakland CA 94607
510-836-1451

Telecom Products
Customer Service
510-836-1451
telsales@nc-mf.com
Job Shop Estimating and Custom Fabrication 510-836-1451 or 510-208-2838

3D Studios, Inc. (Joseph Farais)
800 51st Avenue
Oakland, CA 94601
510-535-1809

Founded in 1986, 3D Studios provides a wide variety of services, from custom sculpture to exterior commercial work such as customized building facades, custom railings, and more.

(Standard Metal Products (SMP), Inc. (Kevin Binkert)
366 Brannan Street
San Francisco, CA 94107
415-392-6463

• SP is a precision CNC machine shop and water jet cutter.

• Services include 2D / 3D CAD / CAM, conventional Machining (turning, milling, & surface grinding, Full Coordinate Measuring Machine (CMM) inspection, TIG & MIG Welding and 2.5-ton crane and 2-ton forklift

Copper Iron Designs
PO Box879, Napa, CA 94559
707-252-1949

• Fabrication work in steel, stainless, copper, etc.
• MIG & TIG welding; certified structural welders for larger pieces.
• In-house water jet cutting ability to 48 x 96 x 4" thick steel.
• Small machine shop and forging ability for medium size work.
• CAD and Google sketch up.
FIBERGLASS

Kreysler & Associates
501 Green Island Road
American Canyon, CA 94503
(707) 552-3500

Kreysler & Associates is a custom fabrication shop specializing in the design, engineering and manufacture of composite products (fiberglass and other composite materials) for architecture, sculpture and industrial applications.

PORCELAIN ENAMEL

KVO Industries, Inc.
1825 Empire Industrial Ct. Suite A
Santa Rosa CA 95403
800 657-6412

Specializes in the manufacturing of high resolution porcelain signs and high pressure laminate signs. Porcelain enamel is used large-scale murals, public art installations, graphic building cladding.

LASER CUTTING

Lase Lab
2703 7th Street, Berkeley, CA 94710
(415) 601-7759

- LASE LAB is a multidisciplinary design, research and fabrication studio, focusing on implementing digital tools of design and fabrication to create innovative forms and objects.

- Laser cutting services for prototyping, model making, etc for designers and makers.