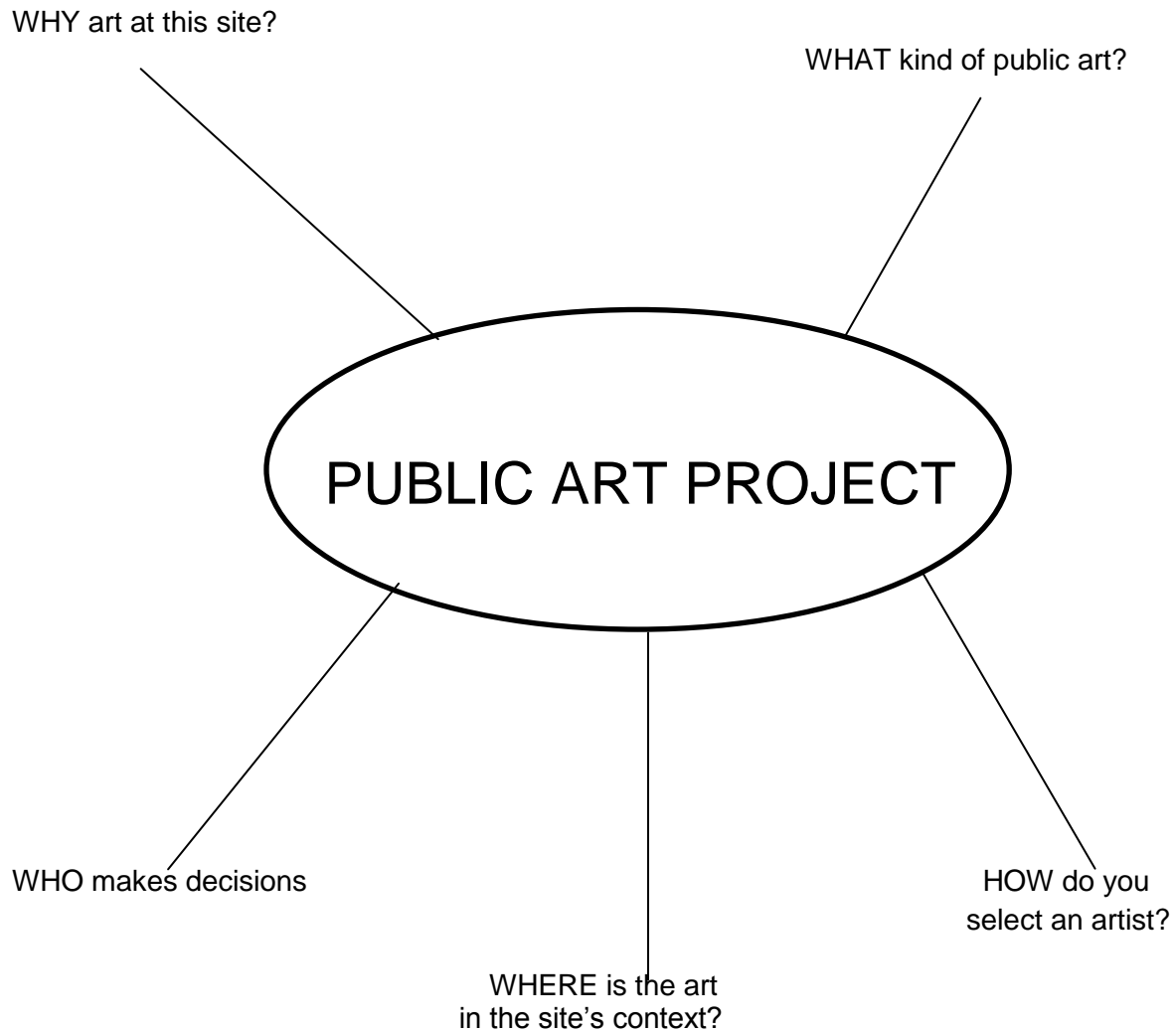


Artist Selection Process Resource Guide | 2013



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The Public Art Network: A Program of Americans for the Arts

Americans for the Arts Public Art Network (PAN) develops professional services for the multitude of individuals and organizations engaged in the diverse field of public art. PAN is the only professional network in the United States dedicated to advancing public art programs and projects through advocacy, policy, and information resources to further art and design in our built environment.

PAN serves a membership of more than 1,000 public art programs *and* artists nationwide, and develops strategies and tools based on best practices for improving communities through public art. Artists, communities and organizations, and art and design professionals come together through online resources, professional development and education opportunities, knowledge-sharing practices, and strategic partnerships. For more information about PAN or Americans for the Arts, email pan@artsusa.org or visit www.Americansforthearts.org/PAN

INTRODUCTION

Whether your public art program has been writing calls for artists for years or your organization is just getting started with commissioning public art, this *Artist Selection Process Resource Guide* contains information about best practices that will help you navigate the process. The guide will outline the best ways for your community or organization to develop opportunities that clearly describe your projects that provides applicants with the information they need to evaluate whether they are a good match for your project and community.

WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS?

Before you begin the artist selection process, the first step is to establish how the project will be managed and to identify the required steps for approval. In every case, strong administrative management can ensure that the best artwork is created in a fair, balanced, and properly funded manner. Have in place a mechanism and/or structure for evaluating proposals, making selection decisions and communicating with representatives of the local arts community. Changing the process in midstream can only lead to confusion and lack of trust in the program on the part of the community and the artists whose work you are trying to bring to your community to make it a greater place to live. Remember, standing by the best process can be the best way to weather any controversy that may arise.

Who Reviews and Who Approves?

Many programs have ordinances, policies and procedures in place regarding how a site is selected, how an artist is chosen and who reviews/approves the proposed artwork. New programs need to have a full understanding of how their given governmental or non-profit support structure works before engaging in an art selection process. Make sure everyone agrees on the final approval process well before starting the selection process. It is recommended that every effort be made to de-politicize the process by limiting involvement of elected officials and curbing the impulse to conduct public polls on the web.

A review by either city staff or an arts council/commission typically includes approval of a conceptual approach and schematic design. Reviews and approvals can be as complex as having all facets of the process be reviewed by city arts staff, public art advisory committees, city manager, city council and mayor. On the other hand, they can also be as simple as a review by city staff to make sure the proposal conforms to a city policy. These oversight responsibilities should be conducted by knowledgeable persons or committee member/s.

Everyone knows that if you ask for an opinion you will be sure to get many. Public opinion does not always ensure good art. Great art is the result of great vision. No matter if a city has a weak public art policy or a strong public art ordinance, the involvement of the public should be limited. Social media has given rise to soliciting opinions from a “public” who may not even know anything about your community and may live in another country or continent. On-line voting initiated by local media does not ensure quality control of the creative process. Too many irons in the fire can lead to “art by committee” with the artist frantically trying to accommodate everyone’s ideas while his/her own get lost in the shuffle.

Appointing a Selection Committee

The artist or art work may be selected by an established public art committee; by a board or commission with defined roles; or by an *ad hoc* review committee that has been put together for the sole purpose of selecting the artist and approving the work. Ideally such a committee should consist of individuals who can candidly educate each other on art, the construction project, site details as well as characterize the community. Participants should be willing to engage in debate and be able to judge their peers objectively. There is an art to appointing members to a selection committee. Personalities, knowledge, role in the construction project or relationship to a community are important things to consider.

Voting members on a selection committee should include arts professionals, the project's building and/or landscape architect or engineer, a representative of the participating city/county/state bureau, and at least one citizen at large who represents the community where the project is located. It is recommended that the public art staff and project manager from the public bureau be non-voting members. A conflict of interest policy should be required to participate.

Each committee member serves through the completion of one public art project. For complex projects, a sub-committee may be appointed to make recommendations to the full committee. At least two of those sub-committee members must be artists.

Selection Committee Responsibilities

Clarify the role of the Selection Committee with the “powers that be” before starting the process. Will the committee have the final say on who is selected? Do they approve the final design or is their job completed once the artist is selected? Typically committees approve all selections by a majority vote or consensus; yet there are instances where scoring may be required.

Assigned committee responsibilities can vary depending upon how a particular jurisdiction operates. For example, while project goals, sites and suitable art forms can often be determined prior to the convening of the selection committee, some programs opt to assign these responsibilities to an appointed selection committee. Other tasks can include developing the project's goals, sites for artwork, and suitable art forms.

A committee should always reserve the option to make no selection from submitted applications and to reopen the competition or propose other methods of selection if no proposal is accepted. This is something that can be stated in the Call for Artists.

HOW DO YOU SELECT ARTISTS?

No single selection process is the best for every public art commission. Geography, demographics and a municipality's culture all play significant roles. Many established programs have developed processes well-refined over time based on experience as well as feedback from artists.

Public art programs and organizations commissioning public art projects can enlist artists to be considered in a variety of ways. These include calls for artists, juried slide registries, and direct invitations. Online calls for artists have grown in use over the past few years and represent a significant cost time savings for both artists and organizations.

There are thousands of artists interested in creating art for public spaces. A list of on-line resources is listed at the end of this guide. Many municipal or state agencies have pre-qualified artist rosters, juried in by arts professionals, that include artists with demonstrated capabilities and a strong esthetic and that may be available to view on-line. At the end of this guide, there is a list of where you can advertise a public art opportunity. There are also many curators, public art administrators and local arts agencies employees who have a vast knowledge of artists and their work.

Selection Process Options

Selection processes include open or limited competitions, invitationals, or direct selection. An *open competition* is broadly promoted (either regionally, nationally or internationally) to encourage numerous applicants. A *limited competition* is directed to a specific group of artists, sometimes narrowed by discipline, often by geographic location (only the state of...) On occasion the size of the project budget for art dictates limiting the reach of a call and the selection process to direct purchase.

Invitational. The art experts on your Selection Committee as well as the public art manager can draw up a short list of artists to interview for a project. Depending on the budget and scope of a project, interviews should be preceded by a site tour and the artists need to be given or referred to any relevant materials associated with the building site or arrange a group meeting with the design team so that the artists have a general understanding of the opportunities and limitations for a particular site. During the interviews, the artists should be asked to share images of past work, discuss their creative process and how they might approach this particular opportunity. This model, when occurring while the project is still in design, allows the selected artist an opportunity to work with the design team, agencies and community to develop a work that responds to the specific criteria of the site and building program.

Limited Invitational. Invite three to five artists to present a conceptual proposal and pay them a stipend. Site tours and relevant printed materials should be shared with the finalist. Costs for travel and lodging should also be covered. Most artists do not have a large firm that supports them as do most architects. This model is often used when a committee or agency would prefer more visual information about how an artist might approach a site. Following the selection of an artist using this process, there would be a design phase contract issued in which the artist would continue to work with the client to

fine-tune the proposal. Do not expect to get details regarding engineering, construction or fabrication methods at this point in the process. A committee should approach the conceptual proposal option with an open mind since during the design phase, many things can change.

Direct Selection. In this model, an artist is invited to do a project by the selection committee/developer/ curator/visionary/benefactor/mayor, etc. This is the simplest method yet it depends upon the knowledge and ability of the person selecting the art work to make an informed decision for the community at large.

Types of Calls for Artists

There are two traditional types of Calls for Artists: **Requests for Qualifications (RFQ)** and **Requests for Proposals (RFP)**. Current best practices supported by PAN endorse payment to the artist for any creative work related to the development of a concept. An RFP specifically and routinely incorporates a fee for the artist in addition to the reimbursement of travel expenses. There has been discussion within the field of public art about the appropriateness of RFPs versus RFQs, including the possibility that a Call for Artists may include a request for brief comment (rather than a full proposal) on the artist's approach to the project.

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) invites artists to send their qualifications to be reviewed by the selection committee, but does not require a specific proposal to be submitted. RFQs are used to choose artists based on their past and current art and achievements. Often, a statement of interest that addresses the goals of the project is requested. This can be a complicated, costly and prolonged process, but a wide range of artistic styles can be viewed and a committee has the ability to discuss the merits as it applies to the project.

Selection committees using a Request for Proposals (RFP) willingly spend proposal funds upfront to be able to review a small number of proposals prior to selecting an artist to work on a project from design development through installation and dedication. It is strongly recommended that programs not ask for concepts or proposals as part of the general application. This places the artist in the unfair situation of having to submit an idea based on little background except perhaps what can be gleaned from the RFQ and the internet (e.g., photograph of the site).

PAN does not recommend issuing an RFP in which artists are asked to produce drawings/ideas based on limited information. Many talented and successful artists refuse to be involved in such competitions. Creating ideas is the "currency" of artists, giving away ideas for free is not fiscally responsible.

HOW DO YOU WRITE A CALL FOR ARTISTS?

A Call for Artists is an opportunity notice that gives artists the necessary information about a project in order to apply. The site description, budget, timeline, eligibility guidelines and public art goals are some of the basic requirements to be included in any Call for Artists/RFQ. Issuing a Call for Artists is a standard practice in the public art field. There are currently over 350 public art programs in the United States can be found in both rural and urban areas; in federal, state, county and city government agencies; or private nonprofit or for-profit organizations run independently or as part of a local arts agency.

All versions of Calls for Artists can take place online to alleviate the processing of multiple (sometimes hundreds) of submission materials. Currently (in 2013), there are three on-line options (callforentry.org, slideroom.com, and publicartist.org) with many programs opting to create their own on-line application system. These options are changing rapidly and it is best to conduct on-line research regarding the best choice for your program.

Call Elements: Definitions & Descriptions

Once you've decided to write a Call for Artists, there are essential pieces of information that should be included. Below is a reference list that includes advice on how to clearly convey your information.

Call Summary

A brief project summary. The Call Summary helps artists quickly decide whether they are interested or eligible for the call and lets organizations posting the call decide how it should be promoted. Include the project name, commissioning organization, application deadline, project timeline, budget, geographic eligibility requirements, and whether it is an RFQ or RFP.

Project Description

An overview of the artist's scope of services. Describe whether it is a design-team project, commission for new work, integrated art, functional art replacing functional items, master plan, artist residency, purchase of existing art, or other type of opportunity. Include a description of the organization overseeing the project.

Art Goals or Criteria

A list of any predetermined objectives for the art established by the commissioning organization, funder, or community. The specificity of the objectives will vary by commissioning organization and reflects the characteristics of each project. The list can be broad – e.g., create a sense of place within the community – or specific – e.g., design streetscape elements that reflect the industrial history of the neighborhood.

Site or Art Location Plans

Site plans, maps, photographs, or other visual information of the site or art location. Describe the site's function; include what activities will happen there and who uses it. Be sure to include whether or not the site is open to the public, or if the public can see but not enter the site. Include a description or history of the site and community where the art will be and list additional resources for the artist to research.

Often a site for the art is determined prior to selecting an artist. Site is determined by the administrator or public art committee along with the design team in consultation with city staff. An alternative approach is to select an artist and let them be part of the decision about the best site.

Art Location Description

A description of where the art will be within the project site. Sometimes the location for art is predetermined by the funder, commissioning organization, or community before a Call for Artists is distributed. If this applies to your project, provide a highly detailed description of where the art will be located within the site, especially for an RFP. The description should include, but not be limited to: Engineering and architectural information about the location's structure, materials used at the location, visibility within the site, and lighting information. If the art location is not predetermined, state whether or not the artist will be free to participate in selecting the art site.

Budget

The amount of funding allocated to art for the project. Clearly state the budget for art and what is expected to be covered (not all projects have the same expectations of project costs covered by the art budget). For instance, in a design-team project, the budget may include only the costs of artists' fees and travel. In the commissioning of art, project costs may include the artist's fee, travel, engineering, materials, fabrication, transportation, documentation, and oversight of installation but not actual installation costs.

Often costs for insurance, taxes, studio overhead, and miscellaneous items are not included in an artist's budget by the artist or commissioning agency. It should be clear from the beginning which costs may legitimately be included in the artist's budget and which are covered by others. Finally, in some cases an actual art project budget has not been set at the time an artist is selected. It is important to determine the amount that is secured for the project and the art and what has to be raised to realize each.

Artist Eligibility

The qualifications that an artist must meet in order to be eligible for a project. Questions to consider include:

- Must the artist live/work in a certain geographic area or is the call open to artists nationally?
- Is the call only open to professional artists or are students eligible?
- Are artist teams eligible for the project?
- Must the artist have completed a project with a similar budget, scale, and scope?

If you are seeking to reach out to certain types of artists, include a sentence encouraging artists that meet those objectives to apply. For example, if the commissioning organization is seeking to reach out to emerging artists, include a statement such as "professional artists who are new to the field of public art are encouraged to apply." Or if the project is one that will involve a high level of community interaction in a specific setting, include a statement such as "artists who have experience interacting with community are encouraged to apply."

This is also the place to include an equal opportunity statement that may be required by the commissioning organization, local municipality, funder, or owner.

Application Requirements

The list of materials artists should send by mail or online with their applications. Be very specific about the information artists should include with their application since it determines how it is

presented to the panel reviewing applicants and selecting artists. Typical application requirements include:

- Visual support materials
- Annotated lists
- Statement of interest, often restricted to a number of words (e.g. 200 words)
- Resume or short biography
- Self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) for the return of hardcopy materials
- Project proposal (for RFPs)

Visual support materials can include digital images in specific formats, slides, videos, CDs, and prints or photocopies. If requesting digital images, list the number of images artists may submit and how they should be labeled. If a panel is reviewing digital images, CDs or video, in addition to the number of images be specific about length of time for moving images and the formats the panel will be capable of viewing. Identify the number of copies of support materials the artist is to include.

Examples:

- **For visual art, up to a total of 10 images of past work on a CD.** All images must be in JPEG format (.jpg), and 1024 pixels (14.222 inches) on the longest side, formatted at 72 dpi. Each image filename must be named as follows: artist's last name, first initial, underscore, and number corresponding to the number on the image list (e.g. smithp_01.jpg). No personal websites will be reviewed. If using a Mac, be sure to use the appropriate Windows filename extension (e.g.: "smithp_01.jpg" rather than "smithj_01")
- **For performance or media art, video documentation formatted on a DVD** as a Windows Media Player or QuickTime file *without an auto start menu*. Each CD/DVD can contain **up to 3 video samples**, with a total running time of no more than 10 minutes for all samples collectively.
- **For media art, audio documentation** must be formatted on a CD/CD-R containing **up to 5 audio samples**, with a total running time of no more than 10 minutes for all samples collectively.

The annotated image list allows the artist to describe the visual support material and usually includes: description, material, location, budget, client or commissioning organization, and any other relevant project information. The statement of interest allows artists to introduce themselves and describe their specific interest in a project, their potential approach to the project or creating public art, answer any specific questions presented in the RFQ and describe any past relevant experience.

If artist teams may apply, clearly state if you require additional visual support materials, resume, and references for each team member. If you are inviting and paying artists to develop proposals, clearly list the types of submission materials you would like the artist to submit to best present their work to the review panel. Typical proposal submission materials include: project description, drawings, renderings, model, photographs, materials list, budget, timeline, references, fabrication, installation, and maintenance information.

Deadline

The date when an application must be either received or postmarked. List the date by which an application must be either received at the mailing or online address or postmarked. Be sure to state if overnight or express delivery is NOT permitted.

Submission Address

The address to which application is submitted or mailed. Include the online address or mailing address. If overnight or express shipping is allowed, be sure that the address is not a post office box. Supply an alternate address for this type of delivery. If only online submissions are acceptable, clearly state that there will be no mailed submissions accepted.

Selection Process

A description of how the applications will be reviewed and an artist selected. Include the types of people who are on the selection panel, e.g., art and design professionals, community representatives, agency representatives, and funders. Include the number, or range, of finalists that will be selected and what will be required of the finalists, including interviews, proposals, dates for presentations, and travel. Typically, there are three finalists, but no more than five. If finalists are subject to interview, state if a fee and travel expenses are covered as well as timeline for interviews and who will participate in the interview process and make the final artist selection.

If proposals are required, provide artists with information about what is included in a proposal, timeline, budget, etc., and fee for proposal, travel, and presentation, and decision-making schedule.

Selection Criteria

A list of the criteria established by the commissioning agency or artist selection panel that will guide the evaluation of applications. Listing the selection criteria establishes the priorities of the artist selection panel. The list also assists artists when considering whether they should apply for a project. For example, if the criteria for the RFQ includes artistic excellence, evidence of working in the field of public art for more than five years, and experience working in community settings, artists new to public art will be informed that their qualifications are not a good fit for the project.

Project Timeline

The timeline the project will follow from artist selection to project completion. The timeline includes dates for the following milestones, as they apply: Submission deadline, panel review, finalist notification, interview schedule, proposal presentations, final artist selection, contract, design review phases, fabrication and installation schedule for art coordinated with project construction, and completion date.

Sources for Additional Information

A list of resources the artist may consult for additional project information on the project, site, commissioning organization, community, area history, etc. Providing artists a list of resources they can consult about different aspects of the project can help them decide if they want to apply and if their work is a good fit with the project parameters. In the case of an RFP, the list can be a launching point for research. Include website addresses, publications, contact information for organizations, and other information that would be helpful and relevant to artists as they research the project.

Resources for Questions

The contact information for the person or organization to be called if the artist has questions or needs additional information. Be clear about whether telephone calls or email inquiries are accepted or if questions may only be submitted by fax or email. Also state if there is a deadline by which questions must be submitted.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER AN ARTIST IS SELECTED?

Proposal Contracts/Design Phase Contracts

Before an artist or artists begin their research to develop a proposal or proposals – their ideas – they are placed under contract and paid to work on the project. Organizations use RFPs when they choose to work with a small pool of artists, or a single artist, based on their qualifications, to develop a detailed proposal for the site or project based on limited exposure to the project. An RFP does not guarantee the artist(s) will be selected to implement their ideas or proposed art but PAN advocates that each artist is paid a stipend and travel expenses for proposal development and presentation, beyond a request for a brief comment on the artist's initial thoughts on an approach to the commission. Some governmental regulations require the solicitation of proposals for selection, and prior to contracting, for implementation of a proposal.

GETTING THE WORD OUT: WHERE TO PROMOTE YOUR CALL FOR ARTISTS

Public Art Network Listserv

Available to members of Americans for the Arts/PAN, this networking tool connects colleagues and acts as a research engine, newsletter, and stage for critical dialogue. Artist opportunities are frequently posted on the listserv as well as in the PAN e-mail broadcast. To join, visit: www.Americansforthearts/PAN or e-mail membership@artsusa.org.

Artists Register

<https://artistsregister.com/opportunities>

CaFÉ

<http://www.callforentry.org>

Public Art Programs that maintain lists of national/international opportunities:

4Culture (Seattle/King County)

<http://www.4culture.org/>

City of Las Vegas Arts Commission

<http://www.lvartscommission.com/artist-opportunities/>

City of Phoenix

<http://phoenix.gov/arts/publicart/callstoart/natlopps/>

Questions to ask before starting a project (from LK)

- **Where does public art fit into the local governmental structure?** Is it administered through Arts and Culture, Parks and Recreation, Economic Development? Wherever it's housed, how does that affect the process? Is there an appointed Arts Commission or an established cultural council? What are their responsibilities?
- **What is the approval process for your municipality?** Who signs contracts and makes payments? Who appoints selection committees? Who approves proposals? Have you ever negotiated a contract with an artist? If not, identify resources to consult on best practices for contracting an artist to design, fabricate and install an artwork.
- **Has the community ever placed, or supervised the installation of public art?**
- **Who will maintain the art?** Is there a maintenance plan? Has an art conservator reviewed the design?
- **Do you know who the artists are who live and work in this community?** How do you advertise your public art opportunities?