

Introduction to Public Art and Design Practices

1. Text: Public Art By The Book, University of Washington Press , 2004

2. Bibliography

Refer to www.artsusa.org/PAN (Americans for the Arts website/Public Art Network professional interest group) for a 17 page public art bibliography that provides excellent source material. Suggested pivotal articles by Patricia Phillips in *Sculpture Magazine*, May-June 1992 special issue on Public Art and an historical overview by Penny Balkin Bach in *Public Art Review*, Fall/Winter 2002.

3. Additional reference material – books, periodicals, videos

Books:

Conservation and Maintenance of Contemporary Public Art, edited by Hafthor Yngvason (2002, Americans for the Arts) contains 27 papers delivered at a conference on public art conservation. Includes case studies that examine major conservation projects and how commissioning agencies have responded to the conservation challenge.

Periodicals:

Public Art Review discusses a topic in each issue.

Sculpture Magazine, *Art Forum*, *Art in America* and *Landscape Review* include reviews of public art and faculty may wish to identify specific articles corresponding to course outline.

Videos: “Maya Lin: A Clear, Strong Vision”, the PBS series on artists in the 21st Century.

Slides: – Each year PAN (Public Art Network) offers a two-day public art pre-conference as part of the Americans for the Arts annual conference. Curators are invited to assemble slides of the best public art as a “Year in Review”. The approximately 155 slides are then sold as a set for \$120.

It was recommended that a slide list be developed to correspond with the course outline. If CCCD could develop this slide/CD file for the class it would be extremely helpful for all universities.

Introduction to Public Art and Design Practices - Proposed Course Outline

1. THE HISTORY OF PUBLIC ART

Class 1 Introduction and Overview of Public Art and its Role - (3 hours)

Classes 2, 3, 4 History of Public Art and the Art World (9 hours)

(faculty would place emphasis on areas by personal choice and background)

Examination of public art trends of 20th century; arts institutions and their relationship to public art; issues and forces that shape the contemporary public art world. Topics include governmental cultural policy, National Endowment for the Arts, museums, curators, critics, artists' rights, corporate support, censorship, feminism and multiculturalism. Develop a definition of public art.

- **The Soldier in the Town Square** (American Art Museum inventory of sculpture on line www.nmaa.si.edu/study/main.html)
- **WPA and Mural Art** (www.wpamurals.com WPA and Social Realism Art sources www.ilr.cornell.edu/laborMatters/resources/wpa_socialRealismArt.html)
- **National Endowment for the Arts** (*Art in Public Places: a Survey of Community-Sponsored Projects Supported by the National Endowment for the Arts*, Partners for Livable Places, 1981; Public Art is now considered in the Visual Arts and the Design Arts Panels; the Mayor's Institute on City Design Conferences, sponsored by the NEA, have been instrumental in design of cities including public art)
Conference paper by **Jennifer Dowley**, former program director of Visual Arts at the NEA, tracing historical movements within the public art field, 1996.
- **Percent-for-Art Movement** (*Public Art Review*, Fall/Winter 1993, "Percent Programs/Independent Artists" and Fall/Winter 2001 "Nuts and Bolts"; *Public Art Directory* of Cities/States with Percent for Art programs. Most cities have websites with digital images of completed projects)
- **Federal Funding for Transportation Enhancements** (ISTEA, TEA-21, TEA-LU; National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse www.enhancements.org)
Art in Transit...Making it Happen Wendy Feuer (Federal Transit Administration, 1996)
- **Save Outdoor Sculpture! SOS** (first inventoried sculpture in public places – digital inventory at www.nmaa.si.edu/study/main.html - developed workbook for volunteers to make a condition report on each work, and supported conservation efforts; *Guide to the Maintenance of Outdoor Sculpture*, Naude and Wharton, 1993, American Institute for Conservation; *Maintenance of Outdoor Sculpture: An Annotated Bibliography*, Smithsonian Institution, 1996)
- **Controversies** (*Public Art, Public Controversy: the Tilted Arc on Trial*, Sherrill Jordan ed, 1987; *Critical Issues in Public Art: Content, Context and Controversy*, Senie and Webster, New York: 1992; Squaw Peak Pot controversy in "There's an Elephant in my Living Room" monograph, Americans for the Arts; Jeff Koon's String of Puppies; Tacoma "Neon Wars" – articles on all can be found through a google search)

- **Memorials and Monuments**, Vietnam, World Trade Center, Oklahoma City, Martin Luther King *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, The AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* Marita Sturken (1997); *Boundaries*, Maya Lin (2000)
- **Cultural Corridors and Public Art as place holders** (use of public art to provide a “sense of place” for communities –New Mexico Route 66 public art as place holders in a cultural corridor; *New – Land – Marks: Public Art, Community, and the Meaning of Place*, Penny Balkin Bach, ed. (2001) *Westside Light Rail Public Art Guide*, [Portland] Rebecca Banyas and Mary Priester, (1998) also on web www.trimet.org search public art; *Lure of the Local: Sense of Place in a Multicultural Society*, Lucy Lippard (1998).
- **Urban Design and Public Art – Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures**, Malcolm Miles, London, 1997. Seattle, Portland, LA, Phoenix, Chicago; Mayors Conference on City Design.

2. CURRENT ISSUES IN THE PUBLIC ART DISCIPLINE (Classes 4 - 6)

Classes 5 and 6 Underpinnings of Contemporary Public Art - 6 hours

Case studies focusing on noted artists and milestone projects, collaborations with architects/designers, and other landmarks in the field. Includes student inquiry and critical dialogue surrounding contemporary public art issues, augmented by site visits and guest artist presentations. Suggested artists: Christo, Maya Lin, Richard Serra, Mary Miss, Mel Chin, Buster Simpson, Jim Terrell , Claes Oldenburg, Jean Tinguely, Jenny Holzer, Diller+Scofidio,

3. PUBLIC ART/DESIGN PROJECT PRACTICUM (Classes 7 – 11)

Class 7 Public Context: Out of Site (3 hours)

Study of the theory, tools and practice of analyzing site as text and source, providing inspiration for works of Public Art, Architecture and Landscape Architecture. Includes linkages of urban design and public art plans. Involves the community in the development of design concepts.

Understanding the players in the Public Art Process -

Strategies for involving the community or residents at the site of a project. Working within the power structure to move a project forward. Role of community members, administrators or other public officials and attorneys. The administrator’s facilitating role. Helping public officials be better agents for more powerful art in public places, and continuing the funding of projects. Effecting more creative, less formulaic public art responses.

- **The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History.** Dolores Hayden. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995.
- **The Geography of Nowhere.** James Kunstler, 1992 (urban theorist and critic)
- **Placemakers: Creating Public Art That Tells You Where You Are,** Ronald Lee Fleming. Boston: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987

Class 8 - 9 Public Space, the Public Realm and Public Art (6 hours)

(May serve as beginning of individual projects, where students respond to an actual Request for Proposals or a site project selected by faculty)

Explore competing notions of what is considered the public sphere. Investigate the nature of the contemporary American built environment, or urban context, that surrounds public art. The class can be multidisciplinary in nature, with a wide variety of subtopics, ranging from the role of the media in defining the public sphere, on notions of community and democracy, precedents for contemporary public art, concepts to consider in understanding public life such as the idea of carnivalesque, and some material on public art projects where issues of representing and communicating with the audience for public art has been an issue.

Class 10 - 11 Design Transitions - (6 hours)

Understanding the languages/training/domains of design professionals - Theoretical issues linking art, architecture, engineering, urban planning and the natural or urban landscape. What are the common languages and differences in approach? What processes and materials are a part of the vocabulary of the built environment or the natural environment? Why is an understanding of material and function so essential to public art and architecture? What may artists and designers expect of each other in the design process: What is the scope of their interaction in a public art project?

Transitions in Forms - The confluence of mass art, art of the every day and the public. Traditional to experimental, guerilla to sanctioned, decorative plop art to community-based completed projects are analyzed for their strategies and solutions: temporary and permanent, static, kinetic or time based.

Transitions in Materials – Researching unfamiliar or new materials. Going from an idea and vision to new materials. Working with fabricators or other subcontractors.

4. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUSINESS STANDARDS AND PRACTICES FOR PUBLIC ART PROGRAMS

Class 12, 13, 14 Principles and Practice: The Business of Public Art - (9 hours)

Developing a Working/Business Methodology that involves creative problem solving. Strategies for approaching new projects in unfamiliar communities. Researching a site, a community, a project.

A. Professional Credentials and Artist Selection Procedures

Getting Started: resumes, artist statements, slides/digital images; responding to calls to artists, RFQs, RFPs , cover letters; the Interview process – creative, collaborative and business aspects

See www.artsusa.org/pan for Calls to Artists, Artist Selection Procedures and Contracts.

“How to Land a Public Art Commission” – Jeffrey York, NCAC Director of Public Art & Community Design

B. Professional Practices and Project Budgets

Contracts – scope of services and payment schedules; relationship to commission budgets

copyright issues, intellectual property and Insurance
Visual Artist Rights Act of 1990 (VARA)

- *Recommend this session be taught by a local attorney who is knowledgeable*
- *Hands on, practical approach – comparing sample budgets for projects of different sizes*

C. Office and Studio Management

Efficient communication, time management, record keeping, budget management, accounting and tax implications, project management and compliance with agency oversight.

- *Recommend an accountant as a guest speaker for session*

Class 15 - Pre – Final Exam Review

Additional Strategies for Practicum :

1. Collaborate with community on project and include design review and critique by entire class. Hold interdisciplinary design competition studio. Have cross disciplinary studio class using national competitions for class projects. Final product is a model and complete proposal submitted to a national competition.

2. Have teams to make application to a project found on the web that is real. Each team makes a presentation and also serves as jury for a proposal from another team.

If a local project is identified, have the impacted department (parks, library, etc) staff and community members associated with the project come into the class to be “interviewed” by the class. Then teams can be formed to solve the design problem, with each team also having the experience of role-playing of jury members (public art policies indicate how the juries will be composed). Sending a class out into the community to dream up a project, where a department staff receives requests from several students for lengthy interviews does not make friends with the community and has limited real application.

3. Identify future projects that are really slated to happen or needed, through the City Planning Commission or Neighborhood Development office. Select 3-4 different projects and have students identify one by second class session. Assign students to work in teams of 2 or 3. Suggestions include a neighborhood entrance feature, a streetscape, a town center or central gathering space, parks and greenways.

Have students work through the process of exploring the site, talking to community members/businesses in the immediate area, researching the history, devising possible themes, and building a visual vocabulary of forms based upon those themes..

Monitor student progress closely. As a final exercise, have students prepare design boards and make a presentation to a group of professionals (landscape architects, architects, artists) who serve as the critique panel. Presentation includes visual design boards, a team artistic statement and an in-depth budget for implementation. This should serve or replace a written exam.