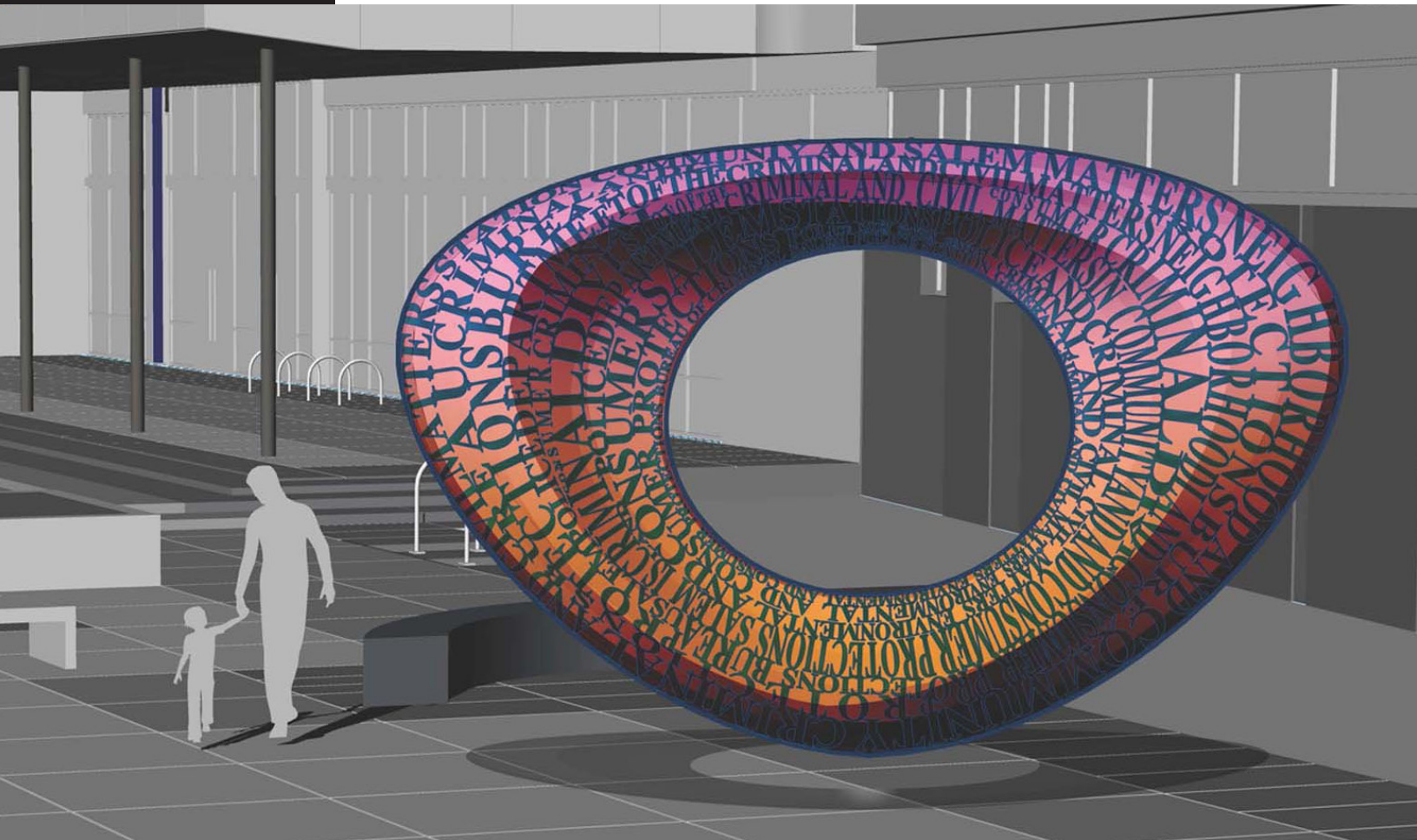


Salem Public Art Commission

~ 2019 ~

Established March 2010



General Commission Information

Meetings: Second Wednesday of each month at 9:30 a.m. at the Civic Center in the Public Works Traffic Control Center, Room 325

Members: Chris D'Arcy, Eileen Cotter Howell, Paula Booth, Rachel Bucci, Michael Hernandez, Kelly James

City Staff: Heather Dimke



Welcoming and Livable Community

Providing and encouraging equitable access to historic, cultural, and artistic resources can help to fuel and foster a sense of pride and connection to a community. Salem's diverse neighborhoods and park system provide ample opportunities for the integration of art. The Salem Public Art Commission (SPAC) promotes community awareness and access to artworks in the Public Collection and endeavors to further facilitate artistic expression in Salem.

Salem Public Art Commission

The Salem Public Art Commission is comprised of six members with expertise in art, art curation and art management, as appointed by the City Council. Chaired by Chris D'Arcy, Commissioner Eileen Cotter Howell serves as Vice Chair. Commissioners include Paula Booth, Rachel Bucci, Michael Hernandez and Kelly James. The Commission meets monthly and has formed a separate Collection Subcommittee to address needs directly associated with the Public Art Collection (e.g., ensuring the Collection inventory and related documentation is accurate and up to date, gathering supplemental information on the artists and artworks).

The Public Art Commission oversees the Public Art Collection, approves new art acquisition, and manages, maintains, and deaccessions current pieces in the collection. Salem's public art collection is valuable, includes well-known local and northwest artists, and reflects a historical progression of the Salem area. Public art brings beauty and unique character to our public spaces, and positively impacts quality of life.



The Public Art Collection

The City's Public Art Collection includes nearly 100 diverse works of art with a focus on local and Northwest artists. The Collection was appraised in FY 2016-17 for insurance purposes and holds an estimated value of \$1.37M. A majority of works in the collection were acquired in 1972 and 1974 as part of the Civic Center's opening and the Mayor's Art Invitational. In general, the Salem Public Art Collection is valuable, in fairly good shape, and reflects a historical progression of the Salem area. The Public Art Collection is featured on the City's website along with an interactive map of the artwork locations. At present, much of the collection is housed within the downtown core of Salem. The Commission is interested in expanding the placement of public art across the community.

Public Art Fund

The Public Art Fund supports the Public Art Collection and is funded by donations and grants, and through the dedication of one-half of one percent of eligible publicly-funded capital improvement project costs. As part of the City of Salem's 2019-20 Budget, the Public Art Fund was allocated \$15,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax fund to help support future acquisition, management and maintenance of art in the City's Public Art Collection.

Per Salem Revised Code 15.030, 70 percent of these funds are to be used for acquiring public art, 20 percent are to be used for the purposes of managing the Public Art Collection to include program management and community education, and 10 percent are to be used to support maintenance, conservation and de-accessioning of artworks in the Public Art Collection.

The proposed Public Art Fund Budget for FY 2019-20 is \$58,210.

Fiscal Year 2019-20 Commission Highlights

Public Art Outreach & Education

- **Community Conversation About Public Art.** SPAC invited the public to attend an evening meeting on September 25, 2019, to discuss and solicit feedback on public art in Salem. More than 30 community members attended the meeting and participated in the discussion. The attendees included artists, representatives from local arts organizations, and residents interested in learning more about public art in Salem. The community feedback that was received included a general interest in seeing more public art across town, an interest in seeing more murals, and an interest in clarifying the process for creating murals in Salem.
- **Scavenger Hunt.** A pocket-sized Scavenger Hunt brochure was produced this year and included in the April/May issue of Press Play Salem. This brochure offers a playful and engaging introduction to artwork that is part of the City's Public Collection.
- **Guide to Public Art.** A second brochure was created this year that provides a brief summary of the Salem Public Art Commission and Public Art Collection. The Guide to Public Art also includes a map of artwork locations in downtown Salem.



- **Good Cents – Commemorative Plaque.** At the end of 2018, a new sculpture made from recycled materials was installed along the southwest corner of Church and Trade Street. This newest addition to the Salem Public Art Collection was created by artists Lillian Pitt and Mikel and Saralyn Hilde and was made possible through a partnership with the Oregon Environmental Council, the Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, and Travel Oregon. This collaboration continued in 2019 with the design and installation of a commemorative plaque to celebrate this addition.

Half Percent for Public Art-Building the Collection

In Salem, one-half of one percent of the funding for a public improvement project is dedicated to public art.

- **Salem Police Station.** Members of SPAC participated in the Request for Qualifications and Art Selection Committee for the artwork that will be installed at the new Police Station. Artist Blessing Hancock was selected from more than 40 concepts submitted by artists across the country. Blessing Hancock's site-specific sculpture *Equitas* will incorporate words and phrases submitted by the Salem community relating to the themes of honor, protection, and service. It will incorporate LED lighting to illuminate the messages and remain visible at all times.

Community engagement has been an essential component of the new sculpture, and SPAC has participated in a number of public events that were held to collect input. Construction of Salem's new Police Station is expected to be completed by the Fall 2020. *Equitas* will be placed at the station entrance and will be visible from Commercial and Division Street.

- **Salem Public Library Seismic & Safety Upgrade.** In preparation for the upcoming construction in the Library, members of the Commission completed a Condition Assessment of artwork from the Public Collection that has been displayed in the Library. Following this assessment, SPAC collaborated closely with the Library Foundation to secure professional wrapping and temporary storage of all library artworks.

SPAC has been engaged in the development of a Request for Qualifications for the new artwork that will be funded through this public improvement project. Nearly \$81,000 in percent for art funds will be dedicated to a new art installation at the library.

Caring for the Collection

One of SPAC's primary responsibilities is maintenance of the artwork within the Collection. Over time, the costs associated with maintaining existing artwork in the collection have grown. There is currently an expanding list of artworks in need of repair or cleaning. In addition, two outdoor sculptures sustained significant damage and required maintenance this fiscal year.



- **The Receptacle, Mel Katz.** This Mel Katz sculpture was donated to the City by the Oregon Artist Series Foundation in 2017 and sits at the southeast corner of the Liberty and Trade Street. It is situated on an art pedestal constructed in partnership with the Downtown Advisory Board and Urban Renewal Agency. This sculpture required repair work and repainting this year due to vandalism.
- **Tom McCall Memorial, Rip Caswell.** This bronze sculpture has been a longstanding fixture at Riverfront Park for years. This piece was vandalized and required significant repair after an 8-foot segment of the fishing rod was broken off the sculpture and found in nearby vegetation.

Looking Ahead to FY 2020-21

- **New Artwork.** SPAC is excited to see the new Police Station (*Equitas*) and Library art added to the collection next fiscal year.
- **New Locations.** There may be new opportunities for re-locating artwork and/or in acquiring new artwork for different areas of Salem in the coming year. The community has expressed interest in seeing public art in areas outside of the downtown core. SPAC is interested in exploring new opportunities for art in our local parks and other publicly owned facilities across the city.
- **Condition Assessment.** SPAC completed a Condition Assessment of the artwork in the Library and looks forward to applying this assessment to the entire Public Art Collection in the year ahead. The results will be used to prioritize the list of artworks that are in need of maintenance.

A Closer Look at SRC Chapter 15 (Public Art)

- **Funds for Maintenance.** The present allocation of Public Art Trust funds into 70% for acquisition, 20% for management and administration, and 10% for maintenance means that minimal funding is available to care for and repair existing artwork in the Public Collection. At present, this means funds are available for new acquisition, but not for maintenance. With an aging collection and growing maintenance needs this makes caring for the City's valued collection a challenge. SPAC is interested in reviewing and correcting this imbalance.
- **Murals.** SPAC is interested in reviewing the existing criteria for murals and establishing an avenue for temporary murals or installations in Salem based on the criteria in SRC Chapter 15. In addition, SPAC is interested in expanding the consideration of murals that don't necessarily rise to the level of acceptance into the Public Art Collection, but which nevertheless enhance the creativity and well-being of the community. At present, all murals in Salem must be approved by SPAC and must be accepted into the Public Collection. This requirement has proven to be unnecessarily restrictive. There may be options to better encourage and support creativity in this community through updates to Chapter 15.