



Staff Report

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TO: Mayor and City Council

THROUGH: Steve Powers, City Manager

FROM: Salem Public Art Commission

SUBJECT:

Salem Public Art Commission Annual Report

Ward(s): All Wards

Councilor(s): All Councilors

Neighborhood(s): All Neighborhoods

ISSUE:

Informational report to update the City Council on the work of the Salem Public Art Commission.

RECOMMENDATION:

Information only.

SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND:

Salem Revised Code 15.030(d), states that the Salem Public Art Commission "will report annually to the City Council on the disbursements of funds from the Public Art Trust Fund." The Salem Public Art Commission's Policy and Guidelines Manual, Section 4 states "City staff will prepare an Annual Report describing the activities of the Commission for the preceding fiscal year, including revenue received and expenditures made for each work of art. This report shall be approved by the Commission, and staff will file the Annual Report with City Council on or before January 1 of each year."

FACTS AND FINDINGS:

The Salem Public Art Commission is comprised of seven 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, Nathan Good and Michael Hernandez. The Salem Public Art Commission meets monthly and has formed a

Collection Subcommittee.

Budget Fiscal Year 2018-19

While the Public Art Fund was set up to receive dedicated funding of one-half of one percent of the total eligible costs of public improvement projects, the Public Art Fund has relied on funds from other sources. As part of the City of Salem's 2018-19 Budget, the Public Art Fund was allocated \$15,000 from the Transient Occupancy Tax fund to support future acquisition, management and maintenance of art in the City's public art collection. The budget also includes a \$15,000 donation from the Oregon Environmental Council for a work of art in Salem to commemorate passage of Oregon's Bottle Bill.

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 materials in the collection. The proposed Public Art Fund Budget for FY 2018-19 is \$79,080.

On July 23, 2018, the Salem City Council held its first reading of an ordinance to allow art funding generated by projects with restricted funds, such as Urban Renewal or bond funded projects, to be used exclusively for capital expense related to art acquisition for the project for which the funds are generated - to be compliant with the terms of the restricted fund sources.

Taking Stock of the Collection

In 2018, the City completed a comprehensive digital, online inventory of the art within the Salem Public Art Collection. The City's website also features an interactive map of Civic Center buildings and downtown, featuring locations and stories of art in the City's collection. The 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 shows, and are in good condition. In general, the Salem Public Art Collection is valuable, in fairly good shape, includes well-known local and Northwest artists, and reflects a historical progression of the Salem area. Overall, the almost 100 pieces in the Collection were valued at \$1.37M in a FY 2016-17 appraisal commissioned by the Commission for insurance purposes.

The Commission has identified some gaps in the two dimensional works of the Collection and will work on resolving a gap in contemporary pieces and works by local artists of national acclaim. The Commission is also interested in expanding placement of work in the Public Art Collection beyond the downtown.

Placing Art in the Landscape

The Commission is actively considering future placement of art in Salem's landscape and continues to work with the Oregon Artist Series Foundation, other organizations and private property owners to identify appropriate works for these locations.

- ***Receptacle, Mel Katz.*** The Commission accepted a new Mel Katz sculpture donation by the Oregon Artist Series Foundation. The piece is now located at the south east corner of the Liberty and Trade intersection, in an art pedestal constructed in partnership with the

Downtown Advisory Board and Urban Renewal Agency.

- **Good Cents, Lillian Pitt and Mikel and Saralyn Hilde.** In February, the City of Salem (Oregon) Public Art Commission in conjunction with the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) solicited conceptual designs from experienced artists or artist-led teams to develop a three-dimensional outdoor artwork that addresses the significance of Oregon's landmark Bottle Bill. A total of \$30,000 was made available from the OEC and the City of Salem for this opportunity including design, artist fees, fabrication, transportation, installation and documentation.

The Pitt-Hilde team has proposed a brushed aluminum sculpture 10 feet in height, incorporating the use of recycled materials in its fabrication (Attachment 2). Through the design, the team is intending to honor ancestors by drawing on basket designs, petroglyphs and pictographs; employing symbols referencing the bottle bill; showing respect for nature and sustainability, and inspiring healing and understanding. The art work will be installed in section of the City's Mill Race Park on the south side of Trade Street between High Street and Church Street (Attachment 3).

This is one work commissioned by the Oregon Environmental Council to celebrate the 50th anniversary of its public policy work in Oregon. Artwork commemorating the Beach Bill will be sited in Cannon Beach; Land Use will be addressed on the Portland State University campus in Portland. Senate Bill 100 - the land use planning law that protects agricultural lands and reduces urban sprawl - will be commemorated with an art project at Sokol-Blosser Winery in Dundee.

In the near-term, the Commission intends to focus acquisition activities to three dimensional acquisition for outdoor placement throughout Salem's public spaces, in collaboration with Parks, where appropriate. Staff are identifying the most appropriate parks spaces, in consideration of master plans for these spaces, to include access to utilities for lighting and security of the work, visibility to the community, and appropriate size or scale the piece may be to fit in the context of its surrounding.

Engaging in Design

The Commission has participated in the discussions regarding the design development of the Salem Police Station, offering suggestions for possible locations within the project design and elements of the design which may benefit from incorporating art. Members of the Commission have also participated in the ongoing design work for the Downtown Streetscape and the Riverfront Park Master Plan.

In the near-term, the Commission plans to build on the mural program, with collaboration at the Rivers condominium in conjunction with the planned investments in Riverfront Park and the downtown Streetscape. There may also be opportunities with private property owners on the Portland Road corridor and in north Salem.

The Commission continues to work with the Salem Public Library Foundation relating to the artworks from the City's Collection that are featured in the Salem Public Library. As the Library seismic and

safety upgrade project develops, the Commission will work with the Library Foundation to store and re-hang works on display in the Library when the work is complete.

Caring for the Collection

- ***Salem Peace Mosaic.*** On July 30, 2018, the City of Salem issued a request for proposals for the possible relocation of the Salem Peace Mosaic. The Salem Peace Mosaic, a 60 foot long tile and glass mosaic on the exterior façade of the YMCA building, was completed in 2011 as a community-building art project. The project cost \$15,000 to construct with approximately \$17,000 in in-kind donations and services. Earlier this year, the Salem YMCA announced its plans for a new building on the site. The Salem Public Art Commission is investigating the costs of preserving, protecting and relocation the mural, which is considered to be part of the public art collection.

In mid-June, the Commission received detailed analyses and a recommended approach to preserving and protecting the mural while the building around it is demolished for the new Salem YMCA building. The City's art conservator of record, ARG, prepared the recommended approach in consultation with the YMCA, the new building's architect and the Salem Peace Mosaic artist. Preserving and protecting the mural may cost between \$350,000 and \$450,000. In building their estimate, the ARG team consulted with specialized contractors who were willing to do the work, including structural engineers and other professionals on their staff. Coordination with the demolition contractor is required - for the selective demolition - and a specialized contractor would be brought in to physically move the piece. No funding has been identified to cover this cost.

- ***Eco Earth Globe.*** The Eco Earth Globe is located in Riverfront Park, at the foot of the Peter Courtney Minto Island Bridge. Completed in 2003, the Globe features 200 iconic ceramic tiles contributed by local artists interspersed among 86,000 factory tiles to represent the earth. In 2017, the Salem Public Art Commission hired an art conservator to document the work and recommend an approach to restoring and preserving the mosaic. Since that time, it has become evident that water has penetrated all layers of the structure, including the tile, mortar, membrane covering a tar and asbestos layer, and the tar layer itself.

To develop an appropriate cost estimate, the City has engaged the help of a local abatement specialist and a professional masonry firm and has consulted with the artist director from the original project. Current estimates suggest the restoration project would cost between \$500,000 and \$600,000. The volunteer artist director is beginning to work with artists who contributed original work to replace those tiles damaged due to the freeze and thaw occurring underneath the tile layer.

Funding has not been identified to do this work. It may become necessary to provide a protective cover for the tile mosaic during the winter months. Should funding be identified, all the tiles, mortar, membrane and tar layer would be removed from the Globe. After the Globe is cleaned, the City would work to reinstall the mosaic, with the volunteer artistic director and volunteers to layout the work, through a contract with a local mason to reinstall the work.

Courtney Knox Busch
Strategic Initiatives Manager

Attachments:

1. Mel Katz, *The Receptacle*
2. Lillian Pitt, Mikel and Saralyn Hilde, *Good Cents*
3. *Good Cents* location