

Chabot Public Art Project: Overview and Guidelines

Submitted by the Public Art Committee

I. Project Overview

In 2005, the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District sold property it owned near Lake Chabot in Castro Valley. Proceeds from the sale of the property (known as the “Nike Site” for having once housed Nike missile silos) were divided between Chabot and its sister college in the District, Las Positas, with each college receiving \$500,000. These funds were earmarked by our District Board of Trustees for the purpose of purchasing permanent artwork for our two campuses. According to Dr. Alison Lewis, former CLPCCD Board member, the funds were intended to augment the 2004 Measure B Bond, a district facilities bond with no “percent for the arts” provision. These funds were therefore offered to Chabot and Las Positas to serve the same function as the “one percent for the arts” funds serve municipalities: to provide the means to purchase and display permanent artwork for the enhancement of our surroundings and the edification of our communities.

The Chabot Public Art Committee was convened to develop a process for the use of these funds. Our charge is to determine a method that best suits the college for searching out and selecting artwork. The committee decided early on that this method must involve the principles of shared governance if it is to be successful at Chabot, and we also recognized that “best practice” in the field of public art should also be applied. Thus it is in the spirit of shared governance and with a commitment to best practice that we submit the following guidelines for the Chabot Public Art Project.

II. Public Art Guidelines for Chabot College

These Public Art Guidelines are being proposed to Chabot College by the shared governance committee known as the Public Art Committee. The act of placing works of visual art in public spaces on our campus, where they will permanently impact all campus constituents, requires a thoughtful and methodical process. These guidelines represent the Public Art Committee’s recommendation for that process, defining each step to be undertaken by the committee as it seeks to embrace the will of the college while meeting the charge of permanently enhancing our environs with art.

As mentioned above, this committee was convened in response to the generous “Nike Site” funds made available to Chabot College by our Board of Trustees. Never before has Chabot received such an altruistic gift, and we, the members of the Public Art Committee, speaking for the entire college, express our thanks to the Board for its generosity.

Public Art Committee Structure: The Public Art Committee recognizes the importance of having wide-ranging input from all important college constituencies, and from its inception, our committee membership included staff, faculty, students, administrators, and members of the community, and reflected the opinions of both art specialists and non-specialists. In February of 2009, the committee agreed to formalize its representation of Chabot's five main constituencies by forming a membership of eleven, including two students, two classified professionals, two faculty members, two administrators, two community members, and a Chair. These members, with the exception of the Chair, have voting privileges with respect to due process. The Chair votes only to break ties. A quorum of the committee is defined as more than fifty percent of its members (i.e., six or more). A majority vote of the executive level is defined as one that represents the will of more than fifty percent of the committee's members.

Public Art Committee Members:

Students:

José Ferreira, student majoring in Art History, Chabot College
Justin Reyes, President, Associated Students of Chabot College

Classified Professionals:

Katherine Tollefsen, Chabot – Las Positas Community College District ITS Staff and
Chabot Classified Representative
Yvonne Vanni, Clinic Assistant to the Chabot Dental Hygiene Program

Faculty:

Dr. Clara D. McLean, Instructor of English, Chabot College
Don Plondke, Instructor of Geography, Chabot College

Administrators:

Gary Carter, Dean, School of the Arts, Chabot College
Melinda Matsuda, Vice President of Student Services, Chabot College

Community Members:

Alison Lewis, Ph.D., retired Trustee, Chabot – Las Positas Community College District
Denise Osborne, Technology Manager, Continuing Studies and Summer Session, Stanford
University

Committee Chair:

Diane Zuliani (ex-officio), Instructor of Art History and Museum Studies, Chabot College

Additionally, the Public Art Committee may call on others in the campus community, or on outside specialists, for technical, legal, or other expertise.

Statement of Values: Visual art enhances the quality of life for all people and should be a part of the daily life of the students, faculty, staff, and neighbors of Chabot College. Chabot College is a leader in education for the Hayward area and our larger East Bay community, and art on the campus and in public building spaces should reflect this leadership status. Therefore, we seek interesting, challenging and meaningful works of high quality that assist the college in meeting its educational mission, and that befit our multicultural community and Bay Area surroundings.

It should be recognized that the advocacy and selection of public art can be difficult. Public art selection must address issues that include, but are not limited to: artistic quality, appropriateness, site context, public sensibility, durability, maintainability, safety, and cost. In addition to these concerns, the Chabot Public Art Committee, from its inception, has committed to a process that embraces—indeed relies upon—input from all campus constituencies in the final selection of artwork.

Definition of Public Art at Chabot: “Public art” at Chabot is considered to be permanent or long-term artistic and/or visual enhancements in public spaces, including all outdoor campus locations and interior public spaces such as lobbies and social areas. Art is considered “permanent” and “public” if it is installed with no anticipated time limit or duration, and in an openly public location. “Nike Site” funding can be used for the purchase of public art thusly defined, as well as for facilities dedicated publicly and permanently to the display of visual art, such as permanent galleries (existing or planned).

Public art does not include the student or faculty artwork made on a daily basis in studio art classrooms, although individual examples of student, faculty or staff artwork can indeed become public art if submitted by its makers to the Call for Entries (discussed later in this document) and selected by the college for permanent display. Public art does not include the photographs or artwork that faculty and staff place on view in their offices or on their office doors, or the didactic or decorative images on display in classrooms. Public art does not include temporary installations in public spaces organized by departments or individuals. The Public Art Committee does not monitor temporary exhibits installed in permanent or temporary galleries or display cases.

Overview of Our Process: The Public Art Committee has agreed to launch an open Call for Entries to bring the portfolios of a wide range of potential artists to Chabot for review, evaluation and selection by the college at large. According to the national organization, “Americans for the Arts,” issuing a Call for Entry is standard practice in the public art field, and the most democratic method of public art selection.¹ Our decision to issue an open call was approved by Chabot’s College Council, Classified and Faculty Senates and our District Board of Trustees in the Spring of 2008. The text of our official Call for Entries document [WEBLINK not available until August 2009],

will ultimately represent two year's of this committee's time and effort. The text of our Call is based on numerous committee discussions, on consultations with public art experts at the Alameda County Arts Commission and the Western States Arts Federation, on the texts of other public art Calls for Entry, and on the following sources:

Public Art Network issue paper: "Methods of Artist Selection," March 2004, Americans for the Arts.

Barbara Goldstein, editor, "Public Art by the Book, Americans for the Arts and the University of Washington Press, 2005.

Jeffrey Cruikshank and Pam Korza, "Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Places," National Endowment for the Arts, 1990.

Mark Pally, "The Enterprise of Process: Notes on Planning for Public Art," National Endowment for the Arts, 1988.

The Public Art Committee's decision to involve the college at large in the final selection of artwork represents a somewhat unorthodox approach to public artwork selection, according to the above-named sources. Selection of public art is typically handled by a small jury of art experts. Our committee has willingly chosen a more complicated path that involves a large number of individuals in the decision-making process, the vast majority of whom are non-art experts. We have chosen this more difficult path because we are committed to the sharing of governance and because we firmly believe that a successful public art project will rely as much upon "Chabot expertise" as upon "art expertise." Still, the Public Art Committee fully intends to ensure that decisions on every level are guided by a variety of experts—art, engineering, legal, technical—and the like.

We intend to launch our Call for Entries on Convocation Day of Fall, 2009. Our deadline date for submissions will fall approximately twelve weeks after the launch. To facilitate the intense administrative workload of managing an open call, the committee will utilize the online service network called "CaFÉ," (short for Call for Entries) which manages online applications specifically for public art projects. Artists' applications will be submitted digitally to a Chabot Public Art Project portal on CaFÉ.

Once entries have been received, the Public Art Committee, guided by one or more art expert serving in an advisory capacity, shall conduct initial elimination rounds of the submitted portfolios in order to identify a pool of fifteen to twenty top candidates. This step was agreed to after it was recommended by staff of the Western States Arts Federation and other art experts, who maintain that in the unusual event a large community is to participate in the jurying process, that community should be presented

with no more than fifteen to twenty portfolios to review.²

Once the Public Art Committee has identified fifteen to twenty top-scoring portfolios, those portfolios will be made available to the members of all five college constituencies (students, staff, faculty, administrators and community) to review and score. This scoring phase will take place during Spring semester 2010. Portfolios will be viewable via electronic CDs, available for check-out at the library, the Hub, and in Division offices. CDs will be accompanied by paper scorecards to allow users to score and comment on the portfolios. Aggregate scores will be used to rank the portfolios, and thereby determine the top scorers.

Once top scoring portfolios have been identified, they will undergo a brief technical evaluation (involving Bond Program staff, the Facilities Committee, Maintenance and Operations, College and District Business Services) to determine the feasibility of their artwork types for campus. Once complete, this technical evaluation will result in a list of several (three to five or more) finalists.

Finalists will be invited to Chabot. They will be given guided tours of campus, undergo an interview with the Public Art Committee, and be invited to submit final, formal proposals of artwork. These proposals are to feature artwork the artist plans to create specifically for the Chabot campus. Finalists will have the summer of 2010 to complete their proposals.

In the Fall of 2010, when the final proposals are completed, they will be exhibited publicly on campus. Finalists will hold public forums for the campus community to attend. After reviewing the proposals and attending public forums, the campus will again be invited to comment on the proposed artwork. Campus commentary will be used to help the Public Art Committee determine the will of the campus.

At this stage, a second and more thorough technical evaluation of the most popular proposals will occur. This evaluation will involve analyses of cost, materials, engineering, feasibility and legal issues. It will again involve the expertise of Bond Program staff, the Facilities Committee, Maintenance and Operations, College and District Business Services, and the like.

Once this technical evaluation of the final proposals is complete and final proposals have been thoroughly vetted, winning artists will be identified. Winning artists will be awarded contracts.

Artwork Locations: The locations chosen for the installation of artwork will be almost

as important to the campus as the artwork itself. But choosing a location before knowing what the final artwork will look like is a case of putting the cart before the horse. Therefore the Public Art Committee has not predetermined specific locations for final artwork installation but has named only a few possibilities, including the plaza outside the new “gateway” building on Hesperian Boulevard, the oval courtyard that forms the center of campus, and the interior spaces of the soon-to-be-complete Student Services Center and Instructional Office Building. Our Call for Entries will also make clear that “other locations can be suggested” and that “winning artists will be invited to participate in the decision of installation location.” It is our intention that locations chosen for the installation of artwork will reflect the ideas of the artists as well as the will of the campus, as communicated through the evaluation of final proposals.

However, the Public Art Committee recognizes the importance of consulting formally with the primary users of any space where public art is to be sited in order to make a final determination of appropriateness. We agree to undertake such consultation.

Basic Criteria of our Call for Entries: The Call for Entries distributed by the Public Art Committee will ask for entries of works of art or visual enhancements that meet certain required criteria, which include but are not limited to the following:

- Proposed art shall display a high level of artistic quality and craftsmanship that supports and enhances the academic and creative missions of Chabot College.
- The “message” of proposed art, if any, shall be acceptable to current standards and policies of Chabot College and its community, as expressed in the Vision, Mission and Values statements adopted by Chabot College in 2005. These statements express Chabot’s commitment to many important concepts, including:
 - ❖ honoring cultural diversity
 - ❖ developing reflective, responsible and compassionate citizens
 - ❖ establishing an environment conducive to intellectual curiosity and innovation
 - ❖ recognizing that learning is a life-long journey
 - ❖ cultivating critical thinking
 - ❖ engaging in ongoing reflection
 - ❖ playing a leadership role in the larger community
- Proposed artwork shall be located in an appropriate site in the campus public space.

- Proposed art shall be structurally sound, be accessible to the public, and present no environmental or safety hazard.
- Proposed artworks that attach to or otherwise interact with existing facilities are subject to structural review by the Facilities Committee and the Maintenance and Operations Department, and any experts those groups seek to retain in order to determine feasibility for installation.
- The total amount of the Nike Site funds received by Chabot College is \$500,000. This sum must cover the purchase price of all artwork **AND** all costs related to the search for and selection of artwork. These expenses will necessarily include: administrative costs; marketing costs; outside advisor's stipends; artists' travel costs; proposal stipends; and site preparation costs. Pre-purchase liability insurance, artwork transportation costs and artwork installation costs are the responsibility of the selected artists. Post-purchase liability insurance, lighting, maintenance and security will be the responsibility of the college or our District.

Respectfully Submitted by the members of the Chabot Public Art Committee

¹ Barbara Goldstein, *Public Art By the Book*, Seattle: Americans for the Arts and University of Washington Press, 2005, p. 140; and Greg Esser, *Public Art Network Issue Paper: Method of Artist Selection*, March 2004: Americans for the Arts, page 4.

² Jeffrey L. Cruikshank and Pam Korza, *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Place*, Amherst: Visual Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts, 1990, pages 68 through 73; and conversations with Raquel Vasquez, Manager of Client Services, Western States Arts Federation and Rachel Osajima, Executive Director, Alameda County Arts Commission; and conversation with Elissa Auther, Art Historian at University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, RFQ manager for General Service Administration, several-time juror in RFQ Calls for municipal calls in Denver, Co.