

**ART VISTA:  
A PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN  
FOR SIERRA VISTA**

**Prepared for the Art in Public Places Committee  
of the Sierra Vista Arts and Humanities Commission**

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We are also grateful to Jerry Allen, Director, Yerba Buena Center, for permission to reprint his article "How Art Becomes Public," in the Appendix of *Art Vista*. We also acknowledge and thank Ed Lebow and Dr. Frederick Steiner, Chair of the Department of Planning at Arizona State University.

## PREFACE

This Public Art Master Plan has been prepared for the Art in Public Places Committee of the Sierra Vista Arts and Humanities Commission. The intent of the Plan is to aid in the development of a creative and aesthetic environment using the Percent for Art Program. It is our hope that this Plan will be used by civic and community groups, local artists, city agencies and departments in aspiring to a vision for public art in Sierra Vista.

The consultants, Nina L. Dunbar and Donna Isaac Gelfand, have experience in public art programs and in planning. They have specialized in integrating public art into the system of urban design. *Art Vista* reflects this focus.

Ms. Dunbar is a Consultant with the Phoenix Arts Commission in the Public Art Program. Ms. Gelfand is completing her Master's Degree in Environmental Planning at Arizona State University.

**CHAPTER ONE:**  
**PROJECT PARAMETERS**

## INTRODUCTION

### A. ORIGINS

*Art Vista A Public Art Master Plan* for Sierra Vista was undertaken by the Sierra Vista Arts and Humanities Commission (SVAHC) in response to the City's General Plan, *VISTA 2000*. The Plan addressed the necessity for arts events and programming to fulfill the cultural needs of the community. The development of a comprehensive plan for art in public places was an objective of this program.

The approval of the One Percent for Art Ordinance in April, 1990, opened yet another chapter for Sierra Vista and planning for its future. It has recognized that public art can and has been used successfully to enhance and define the urban form of a city. Art can focus upon the visual quality of a city and can provide a crucial link of a city's past, present, and future development. In April, 1991, the Sierra Vista Art in Public Places Committee selected the team of Nina L. Dunbar and Donna Isaac Gelfand to write a Public Art Master Plan for Sierra Vista.

This may well be the first time a city the size of Sierra Vista has made a long range plan for public art. This is no small point. Sierra Vista stands at a crossroads both literally and figuratively. Two major Arizona highways, one leading from Tucson and the other from Bisbee, converge upon Sierra Vista. Its growth has been enhanced by Fort Huachuca, which dates back to its defense location, protecting the southern boundaries of the United

States since 1877. Different influence are now apparent in Sierra Vista. It has a growing reputation as a retirement community, and its recent designation as an eco-tourism destination for wildlife enthusiasts are expected to bring more attention, visitors and full-time residents to the City. Recognizing these facts and the possibility that it may lose its rural character, Sierra Vista has chosen to improve the quality of its urban form using public art as an integral component.

Visually, Sierra Vista is somewhat of an anomaly. The beautiful natural setting of mountains and the San Pedro Valley are juxtaposed with the undistinguished grid system, which imposes order upon the City, but little urban character. Any connection with Sierra Vista's urban system is purely incidental. To the first-time viewer, there seems little purpose or intensity in the City's urban design. With this background, the consultants' intent was to integrate public art fully into Sierra Vista's urban system. The urban fabric would thus lose the unintentional quality and gain a vision of aesthetic integrity. Integrating aesthetics into the overall quality of the Sierra Vista experience is directly addressed in *Vista 2000*, the comprehensive plan for the City. The scale of the Public Art Program is more specific but is in keeping with the broader vision of the comprehensive plan.



## B. SCOPE OF PLAN

The approach to this plan, has been to use public art to:

- help define Sierra Vista's urban form
- intensify the visual and actual connections
- be a link in the loosely woven pattern which the urban form presents
- create a unique vision which embraces the built, cultural, and natural environments of the City

The scope of this public art plan addresses how art adds to the overall enrichment for the community of Sierra Vista. Public art can be the vehicle for the local arts community to become involved with opportunities that can impact their community. It can also serve as a mechanism for educating the public about art and its importance in urban design.

Adele Chatfield-Taylor uses the term "places as art" in a 1985 Forward written to the volume, *Places as Art*, to encourage the viewer to think of places themselves as the works of art. Art can be more than a mere object. Places can be works of art; "they can satisfy our desire for beauty, stir our deepest feelings, link us to our history" (Lipske 1985, p. 8).

This concept of places as art combines art forms like sculpture, architecture, landscape design and open spaces into an integral whole. If one goes back to the idea of Renaissance urbanism epitomized by St. Peter's in Rome, the

integrated whole concept of the work is the key rather than any one part. The last two decades have seen a re-emergence of this theme. Coherence and unity are goals which can be achieved by looking at our environment in its entirety. The arts reflect the times in which they are created; places as art can thus achieve a greater grandeur. Art in public places has moved from specific works of art to viewing art within the larger context of place making. *Art Vista* gives the concept of places as art specific meaning within the context of Sierra Vista. This is the approach which we have taken: public art will be reflected throughout the entire urban fabric of Sierra Vista as places become art.

To begin to define a city in terms of its urban form components, we looked to Kevin Lynch and his work, *The Image of the City*. Urban form is given expression by using the concept of imageability. This Mr. Lynch defined as the physical qualities which provoke a strong image for the observer. Sierra Vista has an opportunity to use public art to provide a strong imprint of its image by integrating the art into the overall pattern of the City. The imageability of Sierra Vista will become clearly linked with the design and visibility of the art and the places where this art is found. This connection of public art and urban form is a new way for Sierra Vista to see itself and a new way to view public art. Urban images can be given connectivity and direction by public art. Public art can guide the urban form. Public art thus takes on a new direction for it has a dual purpose. It will be viewed both in terms of the art and in terms of its place within the urban form.

Like any city, Sierra Vista has a public image. Sierra Vista's orientation to the car, rather than to the pedestrian, makes the quality of space and the opportunity to experience views of its natural vistas extremely important. The public image of the City is derived from paths or routes through and around the area; edges form the boundaries of the City, giving the figurative sense of holding Sierra Vista within certain constraints and keeping encroachments at bay; and districts such as the City Hall Complex, the new high school area and Fry Boulevard give some distinction and definition to the City. All these features give Sierra Vista some identifying character. The nodes are important intersections like Fry and 7th Street; Fry and Coronado; and Buffalo Soldier Trail. Other nodal concepts are public gathering places such as the Veteran's Memorial Park. Finally, natural and man-made landmarks give specific points of reference. In Sierra Vista's case, the tracery of the natural washes, the mountains, Veteran's Memorial Park, and Fort Huachuca serve as specific landmarks and references for both visitor and resident. Scale is an important factor in the image a city reflects. The scale of the landmarks relate to the external features of a city. The natural setting of surrounding mountains and the washes provide Sierra Vista with an intuitive balance which is immediately perceived.

*Art Vista: A Public Art Master Plan* was undertaken to integrate art within the overall fabric of Sierra Vista. The Plan emphasizes both a practical approach in how to integrate art into the entire urban fabric of the City, as well as a conceptual approach of surrounding the City, both figuratively and visually, with public art and how residents, visitors, employees, and artists think about the City; how it feels and looks. This plan has allowed an opportunity to explore this vision of public art as places of art.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **A. ARTS AND HUMANITIES COMMISSION**

The Sierra Vista Arts and Humanities Commission (SVAHC), was established to expand opportunities to experience the arts in public places and to encourage different forms of cultural encounters for the residents of Sierra Vista. The SVAHC is responsible for the arts in the City and for advocating for the arts throughout Sierra Vista. The SVAHC is based upon the belief that art and cultural development enhance the comprehension of one's community and can enrich individual lives.

The SVAHC makes recommendations for Citywide goals to the City Council on all matters regarding visual and performing arts. The Organization is responsible for the cultural climate of the community and for encouraging cooperation and communication among all the cultural groups in the City.

The SVAHC can make appropriations to the Arts and Humanities Fund to authorize the execution, display, placement and maintenance of works of art in the City. The appropriations to the Fund equal one percent of appropriations from eligible funds for construction projects, or an appropriation in the amount of \$5,000, whichever is greater.

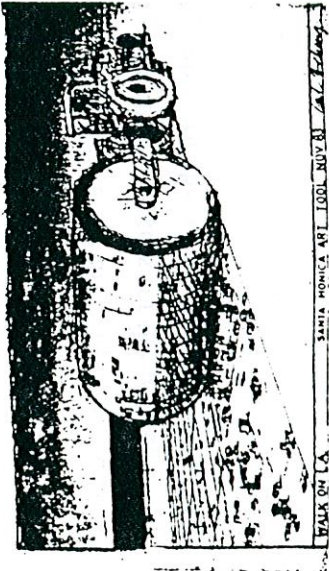
## B. ONE PERCENT FOR ART

On April 26, 1990, the Mayor and City Council of the City of Sierra Vista passed and adopted a resolution, Resolution 2393, establishing the dedication of One Percent of the construction costs of capital improvement projects for Art in Public Places. The SVAHC played an important part in enhancing the cultural environment of the City and with the City Council encouraged the resolution. It was the belief of the City Council, the Mayor and the SVAHC that the dedication of One Percent for Art from capital improvement projects would ultimately improve the visual quality of the City and significantly enhance the overall aesthetic appearance of the community.

One of the first tasks of the newly formed Art in Public Places Committee of the SVAHC was to prepare a comprehensive master plan for public art. The plan was to focus on art in all publicly owned buildings and properties within the confines of the City of Sierra Vista.

## C. SIERRA VISTA

Sierra Vista, cognizant of its location in the San Pedro Basin, the dramatic natural landscape which includes mountain ranges and drainage washes, has taken steps during the past decade to address its future needs and to ensure protection of its natural landscape. A comprehensive plan, *Vista 2000*, addresses all the elements of planning - transportation, housing, economic



Santa Monica Art Tool by Carl Cheng  
Santa Monica, CA

development, as well as elements of park design, and urban design guidelines. An *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, done in 1986, addressed the undeveloped spaces, especially the large parcels in the center of the city. It also focused on the underdeveloped and underutilized parks. A *Surface Water Plan* completed in 1988, was a specific plan for the drainage improvements, channel bank protection and stabilization for the washes, erosion protection measures, and street-crossing improvements.

As the scope of the project suggested, public art can provide the visual and psychological connection of a city to its surrounding landscape, and a city's past with its future. Public art can become the key element in Sierra Vista's urban design in integrating both the natural landscape of desert and mountains and the urban landscape. In this way public art becomes the crucial link between urban design, cultural planning, and city infrastructure.

The community of Sierra Vista is expanding to the east and to the south and further annexations are expected. The west and north boundaries of Sierra Vista are defined by Fort Huachuca. Sierra Vista slopes from an elevation of 4,625 feet eastward down to the San Pedro River. The protected wilderness area of the San Pedro Basin provides a unique setting for recreational activities like hiking, bird watching, and photography.

Its moderate climate has made Sierra Vista attractive to visitors and to tourists. Sierra Vista is a culturally diverse city. It also attracts a large retirement population, many of whom had connections with the military at Fort Huachuca, at one time. With its sophisticated and highly educated

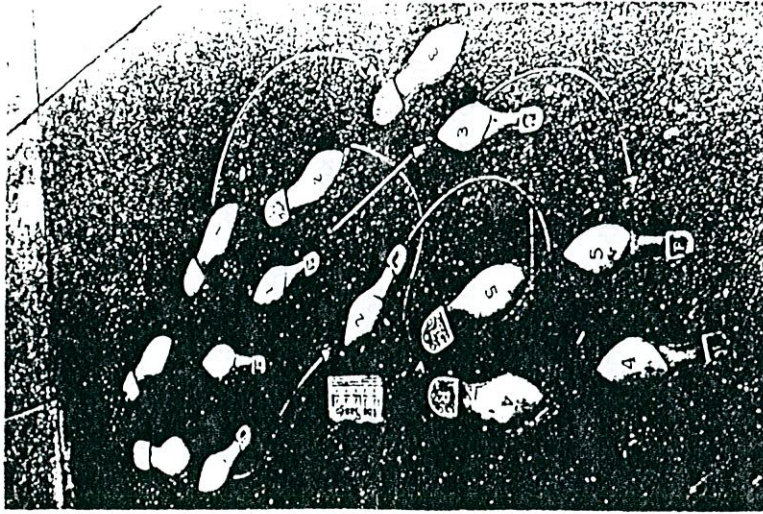
population, Sierra Vista has a unique opportunity to utilize the Public Art Program to draw visitors and residents to the City itself and not merely to the surrounding landscape. Public art can provide a visual link to connect the pedestrian with the city. It is a partnering in the true sense of the term -- creating a community where one had not existed before.

## METHODOLOGY

### A. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

The Request for Proposal (RFP) issued by the City of Sierra Vista asked that the primary objective be a draft program plan to define the Art in Public Places program, to scope the program, and to provide implementation guidelines.

The consultants addressed the tasks with an initial meeting with the Art in Public Places Committee and several members of the Art and Humanities Commission. The meetings were held during two site visits to Sierra Vista. The consultants also met with individual artists, the Planning Department, the Chamber of Commerce and other interested residents for background information, and to identify issues and concerns from different segments of the community.



Bronze Dance Steps by Jack Mackie  
sidewalks in Seattle, WA





Vagüero by Luis Jimenez  
National Museum of American Art  
Washington, D.C.

During these meetings and visits, areas of the city were identified as important transportation nodes, landmarks, or having visual significance for Sierra Vista.

#### B. TASK 1

Our first task was to scope the project. Two visits were made for meetings and to record visual information by photographing sites and reviewing the visual patterns in terms of transportation routes, the surrounding mountains, the historic Fort Huachuca, the natural system of washes, and the park system under development.

#### C. TASK 2

The consultants were asked as the second task to define types of art applications for different sites. We discuss a number of processes involving artists working with different city agencies to effect the visual changes in Sierra Vista's environment, rather than to make specific suggestions of applications. This plan will serve to guide the Art in Public Places Committee and the SVAHC to think about the possibilities regarding the impact of public art. We also suggest the use of temporary works and installations as a way to stretch the public art funding and to effectively begin an education program about public art and its process.

### D. TASK 3

The third task was to recommend public and artist participation methods and processes for setting priorities and for selecting artists and art forms. This has been addressed in the Procedures Chapter which outlines the panel process for selection of artists and teams. The process of selection is an important one and it is critical that the guidelines protect the peer review process and allow for flexibility during the decision making.

### E. TASK 4

The project proposal asked that we provide alternative sources of funding and strategies to complement Sierra Vista's Percent for Art Ordinance. Other cities have found and successfully implemented other sources of funding for the arts generally or to supplement percent for art programs. This discussion makes some suggestions which both the SVAHC and the Sierra Vista City Council can consider both to increase the Percent for Art funds or to provide matching funds to complement the Percent for Art money.



Green Acres (detail) by Athena Tacha  
Trenton, NJ

## SUMMARY

The City of Sierra Vista, the SVAHC and the Art in Public Places Committee have demonstrated a commitment to improving Sierra Vista's cultural environment and more specifically to implementing a comprehensive and integrated Public Art Program. This Program can and will have far-reaching implications on the visual form of the City. *Art Vista* is really the first step of a journey which will require commitment on the part of the City, partnering between public and private sectors of the community, and a determined community effort.

### *Art Vista* addresses:

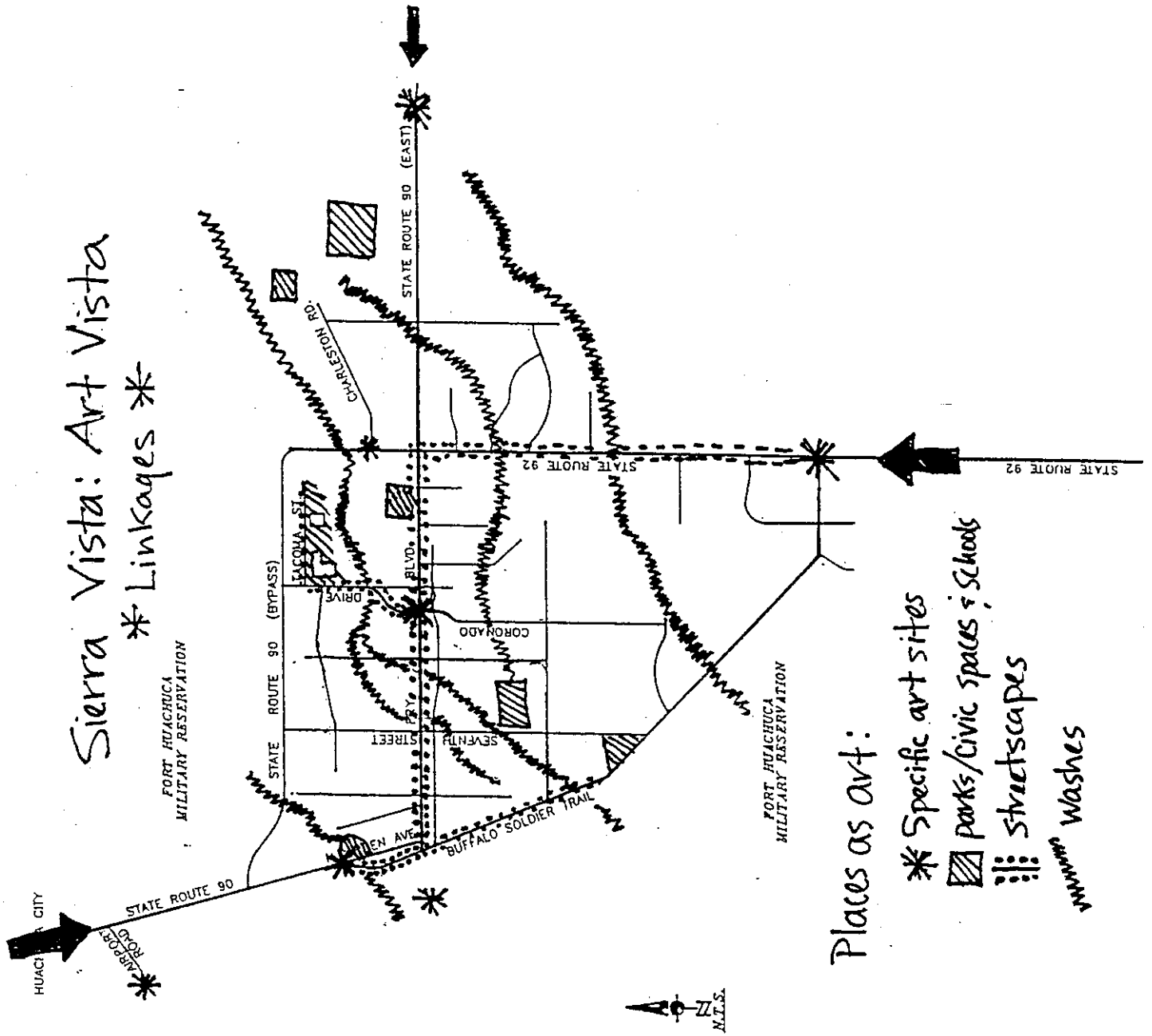
- sites
- guidelines
- criteria
- alternative sources of funding

The Plan is very much a reflection of what the community has determined as its goals. *Art Vista* was a response to the progressive view of the community of Sierra Vista and how a city looks at itself to determine its needs for the next century. Public art can play a crucial role as Sierra Vista moves towards an even brighter future.

**CHAPTER TWO:  
ART SITE INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS**

# Sierra Vista: Art Vista

\* Linkages \*



## Places as Art:

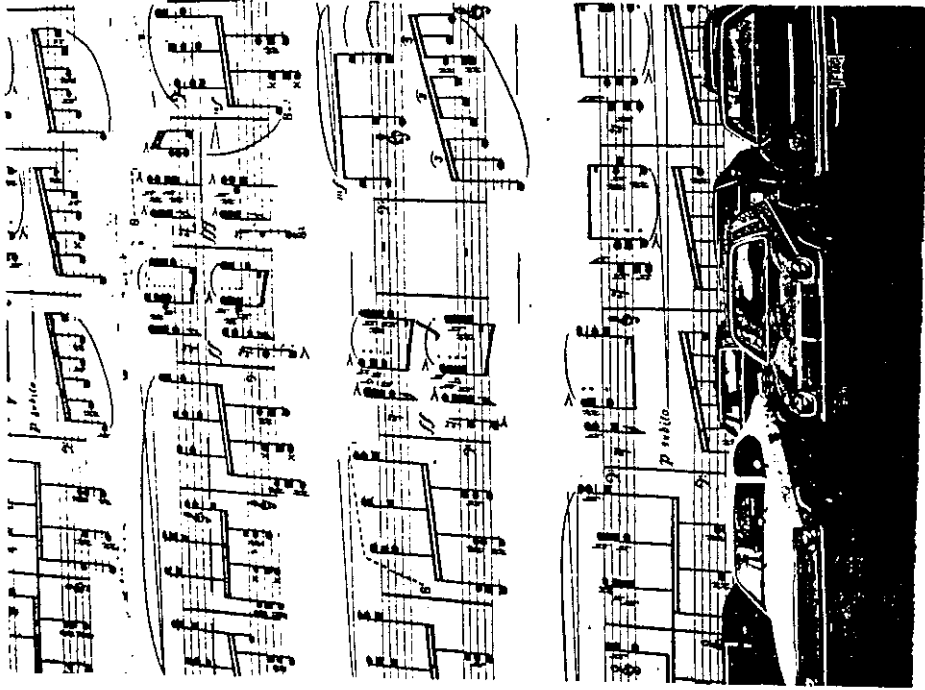
- \* Specific art sites
- ▨ Parks/Civic spaces & Schools
- ⋮ Streetscapes
- ~~~~~ Washes

## LINKAGES

### A. SITE INVENTORY APPROACH

Sierra Vista can be viewed as being composed of five different systems that serve as connectors or linkages with in the City. Geographically, they define how people use and move through the city. From a psychological perspective, they are the framework for making sense of Sierra Vista in terms of the characteristics that make it a unique place distinct from other Arizona cities and towns. In prioritizing sites for public art, this linkage system became a kind of road map for working within the city's existing urban planning framework. The strategy of *Art Vista* has been to build upon this framework by encouraging art and urban design projects to use these systems as focus areas for enhancing people's visual and emotional perceptions of Sierra Vista.

The five systems covered in the plan include: streets (vehicular); open spaces, parks, and vistas; businesses; water systems; and municipal and educational facilities. Two systems not discussed, but equally as important, are neighborhoods and the airport. Due to the nature of Sierra Vista's Percent for Art funding and its focus on municipal property, as well as this plan's priority listing of art sites in terms of high public access, neither the airport nor neighborhoods were inventoried for art opportunities. However, many of the approaches applied to the other systems can be used in considering these sites as Sierra Vista's public art program matures.



Parking lot mural, artist unknown  
Minneapolis music store

## B. STREETS

Practically anyone who experiences Sierra Vista does so first by automobile. The city's urban boundaries are primarily based on roadways: Highway 90 and its bypass, Buffalo Soldier Trail, and Highway 92 encircle the city and graphically define its shape. As Highway 90 becomes Fry Boulevard it is abruptly transformed from a rural roadway into a lively business corridor. Fry Boulevard is the spine of the city and, by virtue of its prominent location, represents the visual and commercial identity of Sierra Vista's center city. To the south, Highway 92 and Buffalo Soldier Trail are equally as important, as they serve both as boundary lines and gateways into the city. Finally, streets intersecting these major arterials, like Seventh and Coronado Drive, provide alternative routes through the city and create smaller scale linkages among residential areas.

Involving artists in the design or creation of art elements for streets presents particular challenges. Artworks must be integral to the streetscape design, and yet striking enough to attract drivers' attentions without becoming a safety hazard. The artwork must also comply with standard regulations governing street construction and traffic flow requirements. Despite these concerns, streets in many ways offer some of the most significant opportunities for using public art to define and enhance Sierra Vista's urban fabric.



Approaches for permanent public artworks in streets can generally be viewed in terms of gateways and streetscapes. Gateways strive to heighten drivers' awareness that they have entered a special place. The notion of a gateway immediately conjures up famous landmarks that, due to scale, symbolic meaning, or historic significance, have come to stand for more than just a physical boundary, but rather the city itself. Works like the Statue of Liberty and the St. Louis Arch are examples of this. However, gateway features need not be large, span a street, or cost hundreds of thousands of dollars in order to instill a sense of arrival. Even modest works, if thoughtfully designed, can become powerful and unique symbols of civic identity.

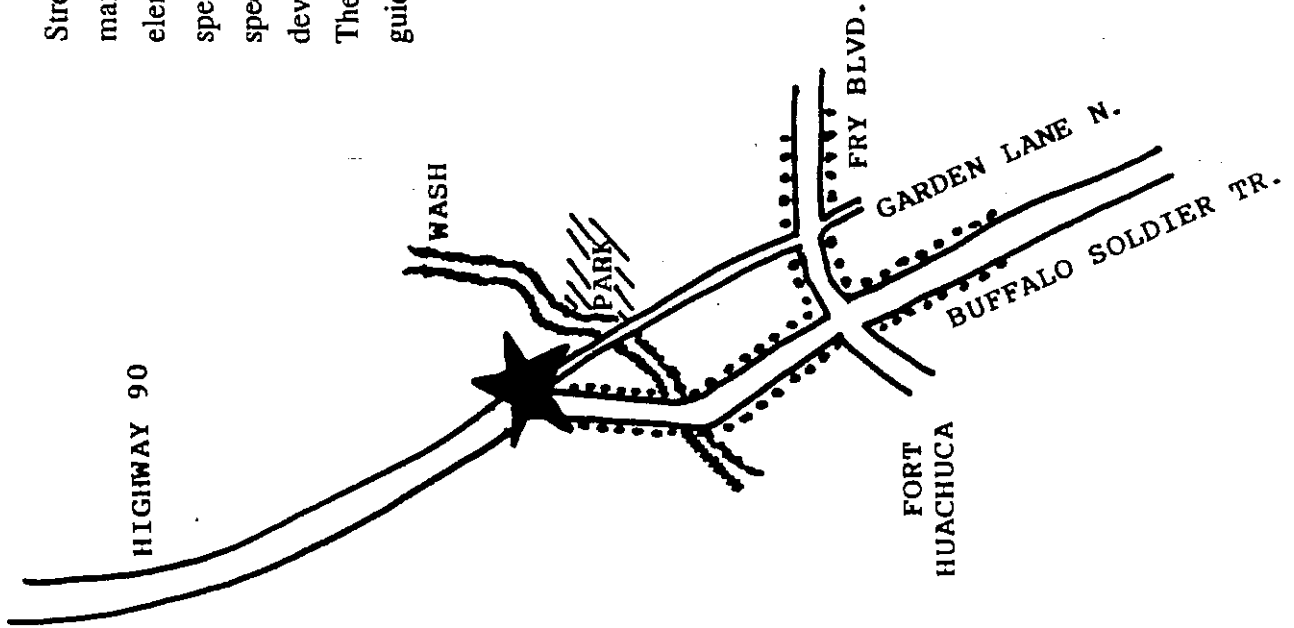
In many ways, a streetscape is an extension of a gateway, as it defines an entire segment of roadway as a special place or passage. If a street has yet to be designed, an artist can work with the project engineer, landscape architect, and other design professionals to create a distinct environment that addresses the uses of the roadway, as well as the geographic, natural and/or urban character surrounding it. The artist's materials could include, but are not limited to, the shape of the street, sidewalk paving patterns and colors, landscaping, street furniture (benches, trash receptacles, water fountains, etc.), lighting, signage, and other features related to that particular area. Even though most of Sierra Vista's major arterials have already been built, many artist-designed amenities can still be added, especially under the private partner initiatives already in place whereby civic groups and businesses adopt portions of streets for improvements and maintenance.

Strong design guidelines for signage and landscaping can go a long way in maximizing the goals set forth in this plan. And while both of these elements can and have been used by artists in the development of site-specific artworks, it is not recommended that Percent for Art funds be used specifically for these amenities. Well-enforced design guidelines for private development are better suited to encouraging a unified aesthetic in this area. The Public Art Master Plan is meant to work in conjunction with these guidelines to nurture and enhance the city's overall visual environment.

### 1. Site Priorities

#### Highway 90 at Garden Avenue North

This major thoroughfare is the most travelled entrance into the city. Unfortunately, driving south on Highway 90 one is more aware of approaching Ft. Huachuca than entering into the heart of Sierra Vista. This intersection is strategically located and highly visible--as an art site it will greet and set the tone for visitors' first impressions of the city. The Lions Club has already expressed an interest in adopting this road segment for landscaping enhancement and maintenance. Ft. Huachuca should be encouraged to complement this effort on the west side of the highway. Percent for Art funds could be pooled with contributions from the Lions Club and the Fort to developing a streetscape theme and site-integrated monument announcing the entrance to Sierra Vista.

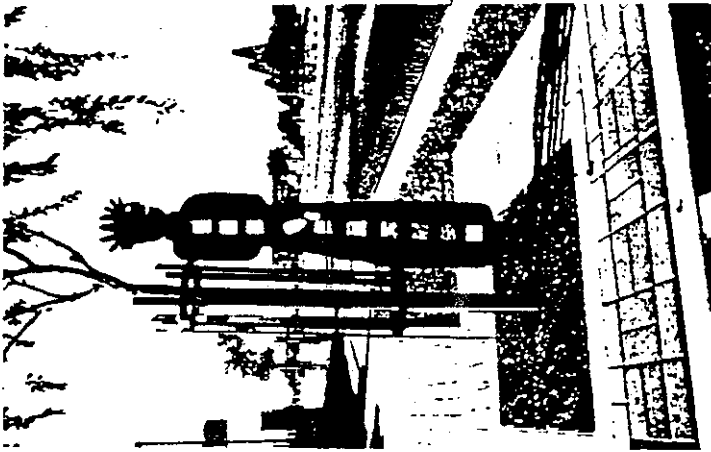


### Highway 92 at Buffalo Soldier Trail

Although not technically a city boundary marker, this intersection signals the entrance into the business core of Sierra Vista. As the city continues to grow southward, this area will become increasingly more significant. An obvious art opportunity would call for a marker and or some linear art feature highlighting this passage. However, given the site's eventual commercial development, the long-term impact of the work may be tenuous. An alternative site could be the electrical power station on the northeast corner of the intersection. Usually dismissed as incomprehensible and dangerous, power stations contribute little to the aesthetics of their surroundings. In other cities artists have been successful in transforming these ominous structures into functional, and even humerous works of art. Technical and financial support from the power company could supplement Percent for Art funds for this challenging project.

### Fry Boulevard

Fry Boulevard is the most densely commercial street in Sierra Vista. Despite its high visibility, the level of existing development along the street makes it a difficult, if not impossible public art site. In order to make a difference, any improvements must be adopted for most, if not the entire length of the roadway. Public art can be one component of these improvements, but it can not be a solution by itself. Obvious changes that could enhance the visual continuity



Dunlap Ave. Tree Guards by Garth Edwards  
Phoenix, AZ

along Fry would include a consistent landscaping and paving design; distinct street signage, cross walks, and street furniture; and a unique color scheme for lighting and street furniture.

#### Coronado Drive, North of Fry Boulevard

Coronado is the major access street to the city's municipal and civic complex. Streetscape color and landscaping themes; opportunities for temporary and/or permanent banners and markers; and bicycle and pedestrian trails are all possibilities for alerting drivers and visitors to the street's important civic destination. These enhancements could also connect with other wash and street linkages like Woodcutter's Linear Park and Fry Boulevard.

### C. OPEN SPACES, PARKS AND VISTAS

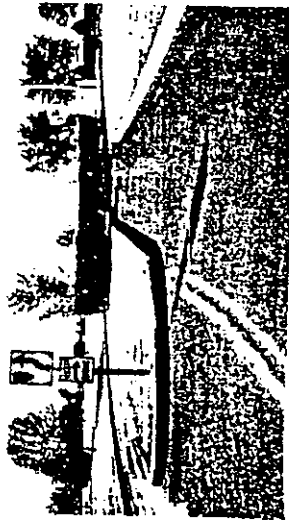
From any point in Sierra Vista one is immediately struck by the vastness of open spaces that both surround the city and exist within its boundaries. The nearby Huachuca Mountains, coupled with the abundance of gently rolling fields, stark desert landscaping and washes are as prominent a part of Sierra Vista's identity as its man-made network of streets and highways. The dramatic outline of the Huachuca Mountains physically orients residents to the location and scale of the city. During interviews with local artists, the Huachucas were constantly cited as a source of artistic inspiration as well as a reason for choosing to live in the area. In thinking about the role of public art and open spaces, the strategy for artists must

be to work with and complement the beauty of the surrounding topography and view sheds, while also serving the recreational needs of residents. Undeveloped land slated for future parks, like Soldier's Creek Park are ideal opportunities for involving artists on design teams to shape the entire look and feel of the park. Existing parks, like Veterans Memorial Park and Tompkins' Park present a range of possibilities from inviting artists to redesign or create special areas and/or features, to developing creative functional amenities, such as play equipment, fountains, gardens, shade structures, or designing site-specific artworks that could be permanent or temporary in nature.

### 1. Art Site Priorities

#### Veteran's Memorial Park (City Park)

This prominently located, large urban park offers many recreational opportunities and is well used by area residents and students. Still, it lacks special features and design elements that distinguish it from other center city parks. Sierra Vista's Community Services Department has expressed a desire to use Percent for Art funds to commission an artwork for the park honoring war veterans. This priority project could be a traditional free-standing sculpture sited in a prominent location in the park, however, as discussed in the Procedures chapter, artists should be allowed to propose alternative concepts and locations for the memorial. For example, the Art in Public Places Committee has suggested that the entire entrance of the park be considered as part of the artwork. Calls for proposals for



Entrance to Veterans Memorial Park  
Sierra Vista, AZ

this work should encourage artists to explore creative and unique solutions to the project.

### Tompkins' Park

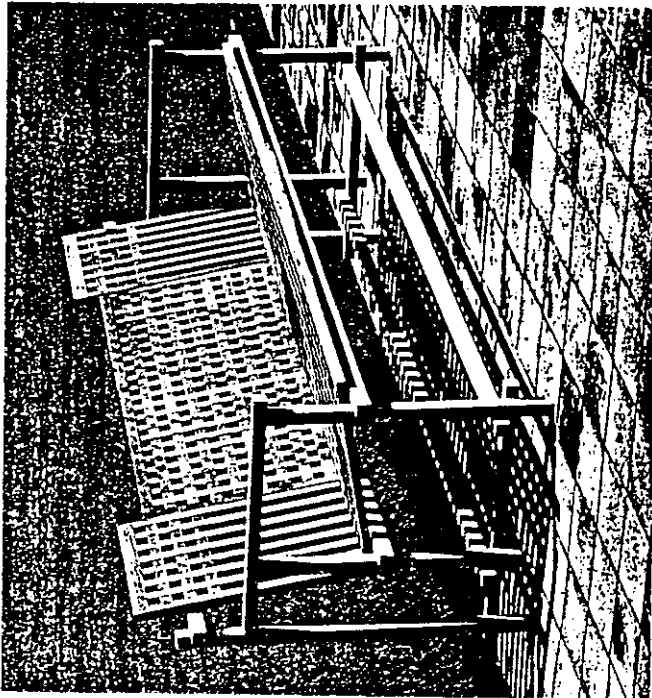
In its current state, Tompkins' Park offers a wide range of art possibilities. Artists should be invited to visit the site and propose works that could be integrated into the existing park plan or even propose modifications to the plan, if necessary.

### Soldier's Creek Park

This park, along with other undeveloped open spaces are ideal opportunities to involve artists on design teams to work with the city and other design consultants to impact the entire look of the park before it is built. If possible, designs should attempt to connect the park improvements with those recommended along Buffalo Soldier Trail and other linkage systems.

### All Parks

All park sites can become opportunities for temporary site-specific artworks and outdoor travelling exhibitions of existing sculptural work. Community and or business sponsorship of specific projects or park locations can be matched with grant or Percent for Art funds to cover the relatively small costs for such projects.

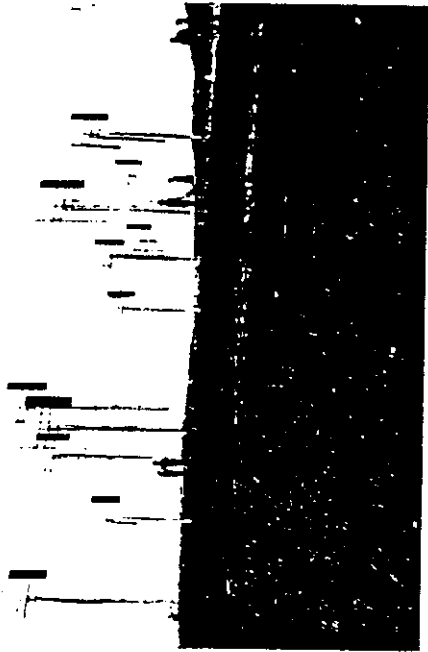


Teak Bench by Richard Fleishner  
MIT Project-Boston, MA

#### D. BUSINESSES

The SVAHC has accepted the responsibility for expanding opportunities to experience art in public places in Sierra Vista. In order to maximize these opportunities and truly integrate art into the City's urban fabric, the private sector must take initiatives toward this goal as well. Many businesses have already recognized the economic advantages of using public art to create a distinct identity among competitors and to attract audiences. Robert Wick's large bronze sculptures surrounding the Wick Building make a unique, eye-catching statement that sets it apart from other commercial complexes in Sierra Vista. Malls and other businesses frequently attract shoppers through art exhibitions and performances. Tucson's award-winning *Old Pueblo Museum* in the Foothills Mall continues to be an important destination for visitors and residents alike.

Beyond the direct benefits to businesses, the arts can contribute to a larger appreciation of Sierra Vista as a better place to live and work. A culturally rich community with a strong aesthetic identity is as much a draw for future residents and tourists as is the area's natural beauty and mild climate. The drive to nurture this cultural environment can be initiated by the SVAHC through a variety of ways, but eventually businesses themselves must take over the lead in directing and supporting public art in the private sector.



Sound Garden by Doug Hollis  
Seattle, WA

## 1. Recommendations for Private Sector Involvement

### Education

Develop a public art speakers' bureau to educate businesses about the Sierra Vista Public Art Master Plan as well as to show examples of how businesses around the country have incorporated public art into private development along with the associated benefits of this direction. Use the Arizona Commission on the Arts' artists slide bank, as well as the National Association of Local Arts Agencies (NAALA) Report, *Public Art in Private Development: A Guide for Local Arts Agencies and Municipalities*.

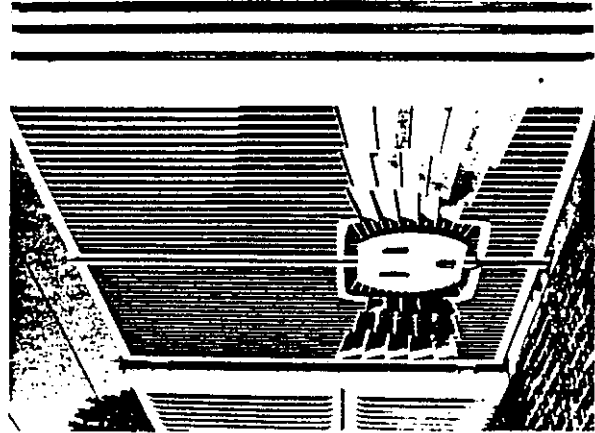
### Organization

Work with the Sierra Vista Chamber of Commerce to create a Business Committee for the Arts which could serve as liaison between the SVAHC and the business community for initiating and implementing a public art program for the private sector.

### Incentives

Use non-tax supported initiatives to encourage private sector participation in a public art program:

- o Modify landscaping and/or other development code requirements for businesses that incorporate art into their property in highly visible, public areas.
- o Provide technical assistance in helping businesses



Gate for Nelson Substation  
by M. Tomkins & C. Colquhite  
Seattle, WA



identify and commission artists for permanent public art projects for their developments.

- o Develop a program which instructs and encourages businesses to organize and sponsor art exhibitions and/or temporary artworks in publicly accessible commercial areas.
- o Recognize and acknowledge businesses participating in the public art program with an award ceremony and other positive publicity efforts.

## **2. Site Priorities**

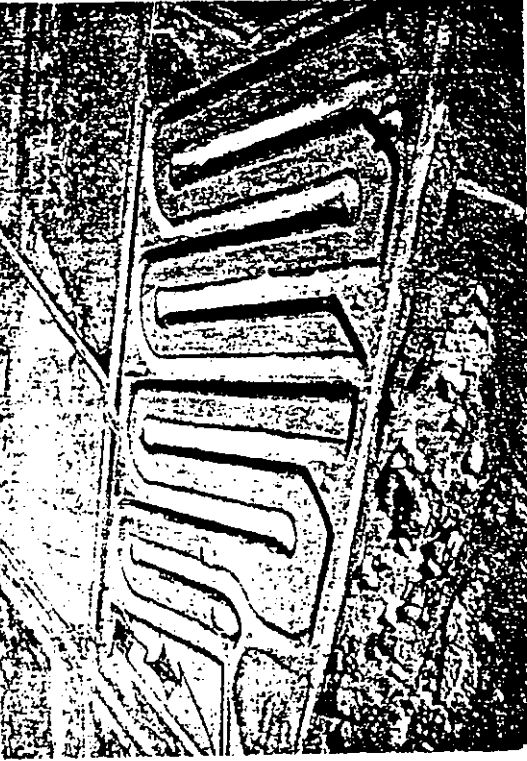
Fry Boulevard and Highway 92 are both highly visible commercial corridors that could benefit from private sector initiatives.

## **E. WATER SYSTEMS**

The network of natural washes that meander through the city's rigid grid of streets are unique features that serve as important linkages and natural landmarks for Sierra Vista. Washes are sanctuaries for wildlife, and as traffic volumes increase, they will also become sanctuaries for people looking for alternative walking and cycling routes through the city. From a driver's perspective, crossing over the washes provides a brief respite from commercial distractions that line the streets by revealing a more rural orientation to the city.

Clearly washes serve a vital function as drainageways and any enhanced design addressing them must first respond to this primary use. However, these areas have also proven to be excellent linear parks and nature trails. Woodcutter's Linear Park off of Coronado Drive is a local example of how a wash can begin to be transformed from a sunken alleyway into a natural amenity that acknowledges and celebrates the importance of the area's water passages. As with parks and open spaces, artists can be invited to work with communities to understand the existing conditions and uses of individual washes and then develop projects that respond to and enhance the possibilities of these wonderful sites.

## 1. Art Site Priorities



Duckweed water treatment plant by Viet Ngo; Devil's Lake, ND

### Wash Systems Designated in Vista 2000's Open Spaces and Recreation Plan

Vista 2000 already has a policy statement requiring private developers to take on improvements to adjoining washes. This policy could be amended to require that a percentage of the funds allocated for the wash improvements be reserved for including an artist on the project. The artist would be selected and contracted through the SVAHC's public art procedures and guidelines.

### Waste Water Treatment Plant: Wetlands Project

The Wetlands Project is a plan to convert Sierra Vista's waste water treatment plant from a system made up of a series of stabilization ponds into one in which each existing treatment pond would be



Rockwalls by Lloyd Hamrol  
Washington, D.C.

converted into 4 cells of surface and sub-surface marshes. These series of marshes would naturally detoxify Sierra Vista's waste water while providing a habitat for waterfowl and the eventual construction of an interpretive center and hiking trails. While the project's funding sources have yet to be secured, the potential for transforming this remote facility into an environmental and economic asset is tremendous. As an art opportunity, the Wetlands Project represents an ideal venue for involving a new breed of environmental public artist specializing in work that addresses ecologically sensitive design and public education related to public work facilities. The National Endowment for the Arts could be an alternate funding source in supporting the artist(s)' role in this project.

## F. MUNICIPAL AND EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

By the nature of the services they provide, municipal buildings and schools are highly public entities that are inherent symbols of civic identity. As a young city, Sierra Vista has the opportunity to direct the manner in which these institutions reflect the past, present and future goals of its citizens. In the linkage system described in this plan, municipal and educational facilities represent focus areas that reinforce the cultural priorities of the city.

## 1. Art Site Priorities

### City Hall Complex

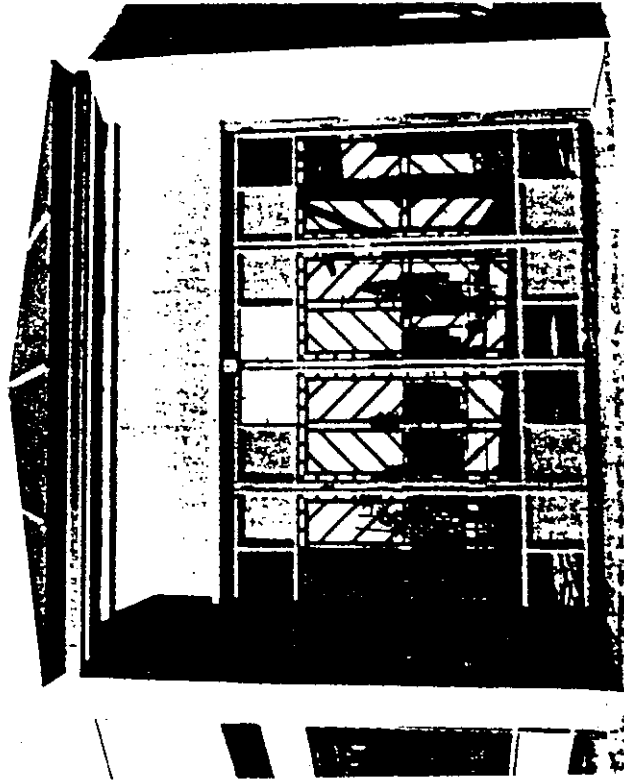
Sierra Vista's governmental complex is situated at the intersection of Coronado Drive and Tacoma and includes the city's police headquarters, library, community center, city hall, and sports center. Although currently surrounded by fields and undeveloped property, the site will eventually be competing for visibility with commercial shopping areas and housing developments along Coronado. Public art can help draw attention to this important area and encourage residents and visitors to utilize its facilities. Art opportunities could include, but are not limited to inviting artists to work with landscape architects on the new xeriscape theme for the area, as well as the commissioning of site-specific sculptural works, pedestrian paths, and signage reflecting the history of Sierra Vista.

### New Fire and Police Stations

Both of these facilities offer opportunities for involving artists on the design teams of the buildings before they are built. Working in collaboration with the project architect, an artist could help propose low-budget, creative design features or artworks that celebrate and educate the public on the functions and importance of these public services.

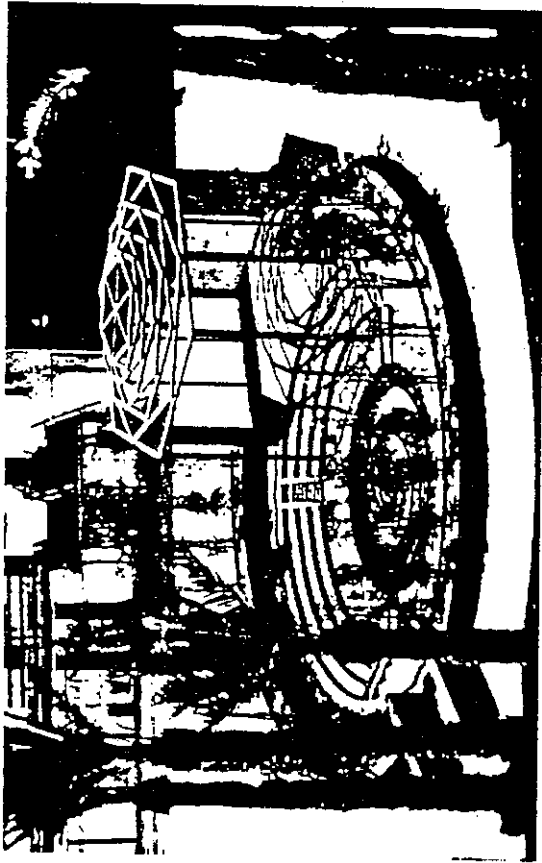
All Schools

In January 1992 Sierra Vista high school students will be holding class in a new, state-of-the-art facility. Designed to provide cultural resources to both the student population and the community in general, Buena High School reflects Sierra Vista's strong commitment to the arts and education. This commitment can and must be reinforced at Buena and at other middle and elementary school through continuous, high-quality arts programming. Although schools are not eligible for Percent for Art funding, they can apply for artist residency grants and work with funds and other resources from local arts groups like the Huachuca Art Society to develop public art projects throughout their campuses. The SVAHC should strive to include school communities as participants in public art projects, as well as in educational programming associated with off-campus projects.



Gate & Fence Panels by Louis Muller  
Paradise Valley Community Center  
Phoenix, AZ

**CHAPTER THREE:**  
**STRATEGIES FOR ARTIST INVOLVEMENT**



Hayden Square by Michael Kelly and  
Mary Miss. Tempe, AZ

## **METHODS**

### **A. DESIGN TEAMS**

A design team is a group of professionals who combine their various skills in the conceptualization and design of an entire project. Typically, design teams can include artists, architects, engineers, urban planners, landscape architects, and depending upon the project, specialists in fields such as electricity, hydrology, ecology, etc. Increasingly, artists are being invited to participate on design teams to bring a unique perspective in the visual appearance of buildings, parks, and other public infrastructure projects.

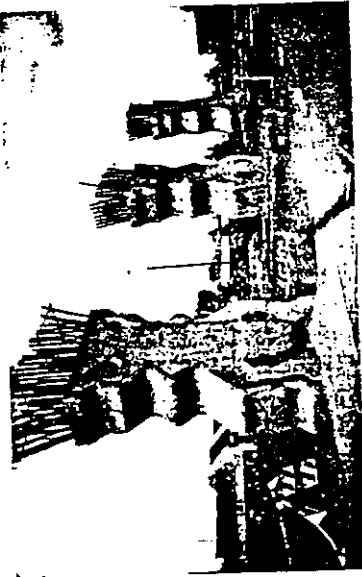
The artist's role on a design team can vary depending on the makeup of the team and the scope of the project. Typical involvement may include, but is not limited to, developing the overall visual and/or conceptual themes within the structure; integrating new materials, forms, shapes and colors into the design; and developing plans for signage, education components, special artistic treatments, and/or functional amenities to be used in the project. A critical component of this form of involvement requires that the artist be brought on the team at the inception of the project before any work has been done.

**Project Opportunities:** Soldiers' Creek Park and other undeveloped parks; new municipal buildings; washes; and the Wetlands Project.



## B. CONSTRUCTION PHASE

In this situation, artists are asked to design and to fabricate site-specific work which can be integrated into a project during the construction phase of the project. Artworks can range from the creation of unique architectural features, furniture, and other functional objects, to more traditional two and three-dimensional. The architect or project manager must be notified of the artist's role early in the project as well as agree to offer technical assistance in helping the artist integrate his/her concept into the existing construction schedule and budget.



Thomas Road Overpass---support columns  
designed by Marilyn Zwak  
Phoenix, AZ

**Project Opportunities:** Improvements to Buffalo Soldier Trail; the Municipal Center Landscape Project; and Tompkin's Park.

## C. POST CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Artworks acquired after construction can range from sculpture in any media to paintings, photographs, prints, murals, videos, electronic art, books, posters, and other graphic-oriented works. Ideally, these works should be commissioned to be designed specifically for the site where they will be placed. Although not fully integrated into their environments, site-oriented works can generally convey more meaning and visual references to their surroundings than works not designed for a specific location.

**Project Opportunities:** Veteran's Memorial Park; Fry Boulevard; the intersection of Highway 92 and Buffalo Soldier Trail; and existing municipal buildings.

#### D. INTERACTIVE PROJECTS AND ARTIST RESIDENCES

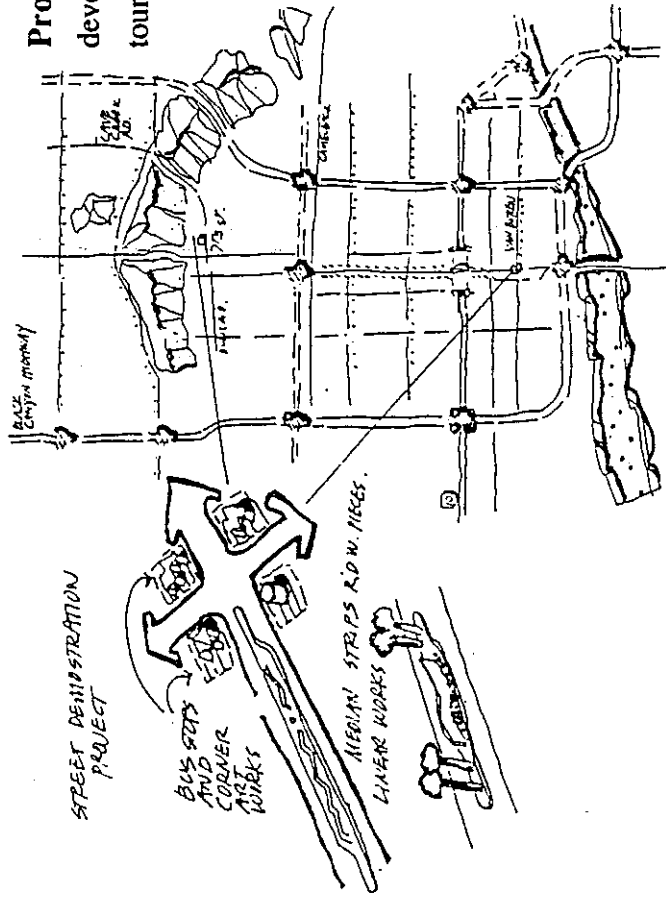
Interactive projects require the artist to collaborate directly with community members, students, or other groups to produce an artwork. This kind of hands-on involvement promotes a better understanding of collaboration, problem-solving strategies and other creative processes. In many cases, interactive projects also instill a sense of ownership in the completed artwork that might not otherwise have existed. Artist residences achieve similar results by allowing an artist to spend extended periods of time working with members of an organization or department on a variety of projects. Most commonly used in schools, this form of artist involvement is used increasingly in city departments. For example, an artist in residence in Sierra Vista's Public Works Department might collaborate with staff members to develop a series of works educating people about water conservation methods.

**Project Opportunities:** All schools; the Wetlands Project, and the Sierra Vista Public Works, Community Services, and Planning Departments.

## E. MASTER PLANNING

Artists may be commissioned individually or as part of a team to do master planning for the future development of an area or building. The Public Art Master Plan has provided general guidelines and approaches for the siting and commissioning of public art projects around Sierra Vista. However, as large capital improvement projects are initiated, more in-depth planning may be required. As with involving artists on design teams, using artists in the planning process can result in uniquely creative design solutions and possibilities.

**Project Opportunities:** The Wetlands Project, commercial development including the Riding Club site; Chamber of Commerce tourism planning, and the airport.



Drawing by William Morrish  
from Ideas and Visions,  
Phoenix's public art plan

**CHAPTER FOUR:  
PROCEDURES**

## **PROJECT ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES**

### **A. ROLE OF THE ART IN PUBLIC PLACES COMMITTEE**

The primary function of the Art in Public Places Committee is to serve as a liaison between the SVAHC and the general public in insuring that the goals and objectives of the Public Art Program are implemented according to the Public Art Master Plan. This includes working closely with the Commission members and its staff to insure that the procedures are being followed, as well as remaining flexibly in adapting the Plan to meet Sierra Vista's changing needs and concerns.

1. The Art in Public Places Committee shall meet at monthly intervals to oversee the development and implementation of the Public Art Master Plan.
2. Using the recommendations and guidelines put forth in the Public Art Master Plan, the Art in Public Places Committee will work with Commission staff to develop an annual plan defining the site, nature, budget, criteria, and selection process for each proposed public art project to be administered in the up-coming fiscal year.

3. In the development of specific art projects, the Art in Public Places Committee (APPC) will review and approve the following procedures as recommended by Commission staff or a designated consultant administering the project:

- a) The scope of work and/or format for participation of the project artist;
- b) The project budget, including administrative design, and potential construction costs;
- c) The artist selection process and the jury members designated to recommend the project artist or artwork;
- d) The project's plan for community involvement and education

4. After an artist or artwork has been selected by the jury, the Art in Public Places Committee will review the jury's decision and determine whether or not to recommend the selection to the SVAH for contracting. The peer review process which this jury represents insures both integrity and quality. Therefore for all projects, the APPC must strive to uphold the jury's recommendations. Only under unusual circumstances will the Committee overturn a decision made by this independent group.

## B. ARTWORK SITE SELECTION

In Chapter Two, *Art Vista* designates priority sites and focus areas for public art and design projects. However, in most cases the Plan does not specify the exact location, theme, or specific kind of artwork that must be sited there. By allowing some flexibility at this place, the selected artist will have more creative freedom in working with the site and its community to develop a project that uniquely responds to its environment. For the purposes of defining a project scope or requesting proposals from artists, a general description of the site and parameters of the project (Project Profile) can be developed without imposing unnecessary restrictions or assumptions on the project in its early design phase.

1. Commission staff will work with a Project Advisory Committee composed of members from appropriate City Departments, the project designer or manager, and a community representative from the project area to develop a Project Profile prior to beginning an artists selection process. This Committee will be a resource to staff and the selection panel for technical and other information about the project and its site.

2. The Project Profile shall contain the following information:

- a) Identification of possible areas and types of art which may be considered -- it should be made clear that these recommendations are advisory and artists are free to propose alternative sites and/or art concepts.
- b) Background information, maps, plans, and other facts about the site and the proposed project.
- c) Project budget, timeline, and other technical information and/or functional limitations which must be observed.
- d) Artist selection process and selection criteria to be used.

3. The Project Profile will be incorporated into the artist selection process and will be the basis on which proposals are juried.

### C. ARTIST SELECTION METHODS

Choosing the best artist for a project is the most important and difficult phase of commissioning a public artwork. The success or failure of a project often hinges on the artist selection method used and the make up of the jury. The process used to select an artist should be based on the



singular needs and restraints of each project. The following recommended selection methods are standard procedures followed by most public art programs around the country.

**1. Open Competitions:** This selection method offers opportunities in which any professional artist is eligible to enter. An announcement with information about the project (Project Profile) is circulated requesting artist proposals. The proposals are reviewed by a jury and the winner chosen among the entrants.

Although the open competition method is the most democratic means of choosing an artist, it is also among the most costly from an administrative perspective. Also, because artists are not compensated for the time and effort put into their proposals, the quality of the submissions can vary significantly. Open competitions are best used when commissioning works for an existing site or to generate ideas and public interest to illustrate the range of art possibilities for major sites like parks, buildings, and monuments.

**2. Invitational or Limited Competition:** This two-stage alternative to the open competition calls for artists to submit slides and documentation of past work for the jury's consideration instead of a proposal. The jury selects a small number of artists, generally three to five, to visit the site and to develop detailed proposals or to participate in an interview process. The artists are paid for their

proposals and site visits based on a percentage of the project budget. The jury then reconvenes to select the winning artist and/or proposal.

Limited competitions are accessible to a large number of artists, but at the same time allow for the development of serious, detailed proposals. They generally are less expensive to administer and offer better results than proposals generated from open competitions.

**3. Direct Selection and Nominations:** In the direct selection method, the jury selects one artist on the basis of slides and/or documentation of past work. The pool of work reviewed can be solicited through a call to artists or by using an existing slide bank like one maintained by the Arizona Commission on the Arts. The artist is selected based on one review and the Commission then goes on to negotiate a contract for the development of a proposal.

Nominations allow the jury to propose qualified artists who did not respond to a call to become finalists or to make a proposal for a particular project. Nominations should always be reserved as an option for all three selection methods in the event the existing pool of applications is not large or strong enough from which to select.

**4. Direct Purchase:** This method refers to the purchase of already completed artworks based on the panel's recommendations. Available artworks are assembled for the panel's review using a call to artists similar to those discussed in the other selection methods.

Purchasing existing artworks is a relatively inexpensive and quick method of building a municipal art collection. While it is important to encourage the development of publicly accessible art collections both in the public and private sector, this type of selection method is not encouraged because it does not promote the creation of site-integrated or site-specific artwork emphasized in *Art Vista's* approach.

#### D. ARTIST SELECTION PANELS

The artist selection panel is an independent committee approved by the Art in Public Places Committee to choose an artist or artistic concept for one or more projects. The panel is responsible for the artistic excellence of an artist and/or works through a peer review process.

For projects with budgets of under \$10,000, it is recommended that a standing panel of volunteer local arts and design professionals be appointed for two year terms. For projects with budgets over \$10,000, ad hoc selection panels should be formed with the exact number and makeup to the panel determined by the size and complexity of the individual art project.

1. Standing selection panels shall have at least three, but not more than five voting members.
2. All panels will include at least one artist and arts professional. Additional panel members may include, but are not limited, other design professionals, and community representatives.
3. The SVAHC shall establish and maintain a file of potential jurors, containing information on the credentials and experience qualifying individuals to serve in this capacity.
4. Throughout the selection process the panel will consult with an ad hoc Advisory (non-voting) Committee composed of the same individuals assisting with the Project Profile which shall include representation from:
  - a) The SVAHC
  - b) The client agency or city department(s)
  - c) Community, civic and/or business group representatives impacted by the project
  - d) The design architect, engineer, or other member of the design team.
5. Depending on the selection processes used, the selection panel will generally meet two or three times to accomplish the following tasks:

- a) site visit and project orientation with a member of the SVAHC staff and the project Advisory Committee.
  - b) Review of submissions from artists and selection of a finalist or finalists to submit developed specific proposals or to participate in an interview process.
  - c) With input from the Advisory Committee, review artists' submissions or interview artists to determine a finalist and/or proposal to implement.
6. The panel shall have the option of not making any selection. In the event that no selection is made, a new selection process may be initiated or the project abandoned.
  7. Throughout the selection process, a member of the SVAHC staff will record all panel meeting minutes and have them reviewed and approved by the panel at the conclusion of the selection process. The panel's recommendations will be presented to the Art in Public Places Committee, and if approved, will be recommended to the full SVAHC for a formal vote.

## E. DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE ARTWORK

Once an artist is selected, the SVAHC staff shall negotiate a contract and serve as liaison between the artist and the City until the artwork is fully installed and accepted by the City:

1. Prior to entering into a contract with the artist, Commission staff will notify the artist of costs, regulations and other existing conditions which will be imposed on public construction in the City.
2. Artists' contracts shall be exempt from the standard competitive bidding regulations required of other governmental departments due to the unique nature of artist's techniques and procedures. However, generic items included in the work like site preparation, electrical and plumbing features may be separated and included in a biddable general contract.
3. On-site coordination in connection with the artwork installation will be organized jointly with SVAHC staff and the appropriate City representative(s) within the department having jurisdiction over the site and/or construction.
4. Specific procedures outlining the artist's and City's responsibilities throughout the design, construction, and installation phases of the artwork shall be defined in the artist's contract and approved by the Art in Public Places Committee.

## F. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ongoing public participation and notification are critical elements in the public art process. The SVAHC must take a lead in planning and implementing strategies for encouraging community awareness and dialogue for each public art project it initiates.

1. Depending on the location and nature of the project, community involvement should begin with the development of the Project Profile. Neighborhood associations and civic groups can be solicited for a representative that can serve as advisor and liaison between the community and the selection panel.
2. Once an artist has been selected for a project, the SVAHC will send out a public announcement about the history of the project, the artist and selection process used, and the nature of the artist's involvement.
3. The SVAHC staff will continue to publicize the project throughout its construction phase and serve as initiator and moderator for any meetings or informal public forums used to introduce and educate the public about the project and artist.
4. If funding is available, a dedication ceremony should be held at the completion of each project involving the artist, civic and community leaders, and the general public.

5. The SVAHC staff shall develop a fact sheet for each completed project outlining details about the artwork, the artist, the intent of the project, and a contact where more information can be obtained. The fact sheets could be made available at various public buildings, community centers, and tourist bureaus.

#### G. MAINTENANCE

Like much municipal construction, public art does not live forever. Over the years, the prevailing assumption has been that public artworks must be highly durable and maintenance free. Concern over maintenance responsibilities and repairs is important and must be addressed. However, this maintenance of a work should not be used as the primary selection criteria for approving or disapproving a potential project.

1. Care and maintenance of potential artworks should be addressed early in the commissioning phases of the project. Representatives of the SVAHC as well as those from the city department(s) having jurisdiction over the site should review artists' proposals and contract language to insure maintenance provisions are addressed.
2. Unless otherwise agreed upon, routine maintenance on nonsensitive materials shall be the responsibility of the department having jurisdiction over the site.



3. Along with other documentation, the SVAHC will maintain a file on each project recording all fabrication drawings, specifications, finishes, and color samples provided by the artist. The file shall also contain the artist's recommendations for detailed maintenance and repair procedures for the work. The department having jurisdiction over the site will be given a copy of the file along with instructions and schedules for routine maintenance.
4. If possible, the artist will be notified in the event the artwork requires substantial repair or maintenance and allowed to participate in decision and execution of such work.
5. The City's current public art funding allocations necessitates using as much of these monies as possible on the actual artworks. However, as Sierra Vista's the Public Art Program grows, the Art in Public Places Committee will need to review the Procedures Chapter of *Art Vista* and the funding structure to determine whether a maintenance fund should be created to address the long-term care of the City's collection.

**CHAPTER FIVE:**

**FUNDING**

## **FUNDING**

### **A. PERCENT FOR ART FUNDING**

The Percent for Art funding for Sierra Vista originated from Resolution 2393, passed and adopted by the Mayor and City Council of the City of Sierra Vista on April 26, 1990.

This resolution established a policy whereby one percent of the construction cost of various capital improvement projects was dedicated for art in public places.

While the resolution was passed, funding for the Capital Improvement Program was voted down by the citizens of Sierra Vista. The consultants were requested to provide information about alternative or matching sources of money to complement the yearly appropriation for the Percent for Art Program, in lieu of money from the City's Capital Improvement Projects.

### **B. ALTERNATIVE SOURCES**

Other revenue sources have been successfully utilized by major arts organizations in other cities. These revenue sources emphasize dedicated sources of funds which are taxes earmarked for specific purposes or city offices or departments. Arts agencies have found dedicated funding sources to provide funding stability for long-range planning.

Programs through the Arizona Commission on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts' (NEA) Urban Design Grants program both provide funding for projects and programs. These can give matching funds for art in public places programs, especially where there are design teams and urban form issues. Applications for these NEA Urban Design Grants can be made directly to the NEA on a yearly basis. Sierra Vista will also need to consider private foundations in the state and nationally which support public art and cultural planning initiatives. The funding is often through outright grants or as matching money.

Other alternative sources which cities have successfully implemented for funding for the arts include the Hotel/Motel Tax, an Amusement Tax, a Video Rental Tax, taxing Liquor by the Glass, and Developers fees.

Hotel/Motel Tax provides funding for local arts organizations in many cities. It is logical since tourists are consumers of the arts and culture of an area, and in Sierra Vista's case, the natural surroundings draw tourists, the burden of the tax does not fall upon local residents, nor is it likely to deter visitors. The amount can be anywhere from 2 to 9 percent. The Tucson/Pima Arts Council gets 2 percent of a hotel/motel tax in Pima County, which brings in about \$650,000 per year. The tax is often split between other city or county needs and the arts or even sports. It is necessary to work with the hotels, since the increase will impact their business. It is important to "remember that the hotel tax is a commercial tax, not an arts tax. The arts must be presented as beneficial to the commercial development of the state and to the city where the tax will be collected" (Forsthofer 1984, p. 42).

The advantages are of this kind of a tax are:

- a stable source of funding for the arts
- it is perceived to be generated by outsiders
- it can be linked to economic development

This tax is tied to the economy and would suffer during times of economic downturns. The hotel industry can effectively fight a tax of this kind for the arts. The industry in Sierra Vista will have to be effectively worked with so national headquarters of local hotels do not fight the tax.

A second type of tax is an Amusement Tax. This tax is often put on ticketed events such as performing arts events, movies, and sports. It can be a percentage of the ticket price. Not all cities use this tax for the arts; and some use this tax for sports arenas. If you want to lobby for an amusement tax, be sure that non-profit organizations are included. Chicago and St. Louis, for instance, exclude non-profit organizations from gaining any revenue from the Amusement Tax. This tax may hurt arts organizations, since performing arts events are taxed.

The advantages of this type of tax are:

- the tax burden is on those who use cultural facilities
- residents and tourists can be equally impacted

The disadvantages are that non profit organizations may not want to be included, since this tax would affect their own ticket prices. This tax is tied to the economy.

Some states are considering revenue for the arts from a Video Rental Tax. The arts are often strongly supported to gain money for the arts from this kind of tax. But the VCR industry is trying to lobby more effectively to stop cities from passing this tax. A similar tax is Cable fees, which in New Orleans go to the Arts Council.

Taxing Liquor by the Glass served in bars and restaurants has aided cities for additional funds. These tax dollars are frequently dedicated to the arts or to tourism as they are in Atlanta and in Minneapolis.

Developers Fees can be used for the arts also. This money is often tied to the Percent for Art Program for a city. This is a private initiative for the arts, as opposed to a public Percent For Art program which Sierra Vista has. A private initiative would include those projects, not publicly funded, and developers fees would be tied to the expanding residential community, which is occurring in Sierra Vista.

Sierra Vista will need to study which tax might be appropriate in terms of tourism, development, amusement or other activities. Alternative sources of revenue have been used to complement the Percent for Art Ordinance in other cities. Additional funding would protect Sierra Vista arts organizations and the Percent for Art program from downturns in the economy or the real estate market.

Dedicated taxes encounter some problems when used as a revenue source for the arts. Cities may want to withdraw municipal support of the arts once a dedicated tax has passed. It must be made clear that the dedicated tax is for the Percent For Art program and should not mean a dollar decrease in municipal support of the arts. Using the dedicated revenue for specific programs like the Public Art Program may circumvent this.

All dedicated tax revenue is subject to economic fluctuations. For the arts to create and to pass a dedicated tax, there must be an effective and powerful lobby by the arts community.

To demonstrate effectively to create and to pass a dedicated revenue source for the arts:

- Establish a case for support of the arts
- Establish a system of accountability as to how the funds will be spent
- Create criteria for how the funds will be spent
- Generate both arts community and political support



A successful program of funding for the Public Art Program depends upon cooperation between the public and private sectors of the community. The economic impact and benefit of the arts for a city's residents and visitors has been clearly established. A successful public art program is in everyone's mutual interest. SVAHC and the Art in Public Places Committee must encourage both the public and the private sectors to be responsible for the Public Art Program's continuity to ensure its continued benefits.

**CHAPTER SIX:**

**SUMMARY**

## SUMMARY

The City of Sierra Vista, the SVAHC and the Art in Public Places Committee have demonstrated a commitment to improving Sierra Vista's cultural environment and more specifically to implementing a comprehensive and integrated Public Art Program. This Program can and will have far-reaching implications on the visual form of the City. *Art Vista* is really the first step of a journey which will require commitment on the part of the City, partnering between public and private sectors of the community, and a determined community effort.

### *Art Vista* addresses:

- sites
- guidelines
- criteria
- alternative sources of funding

The Plan is very much a reflection of what the community has determined as its goals. *Art Vista* was a response to the progressive view of the community of Sierra Vista and how a city looks at itself to determine its needs for the next century. Public art can play a crucial role as Sierra Vista moves towards an even brighter future.

**APPENDIX**

## APPENDIX

### A. MEMBERS OF SIERRA VISTA COMMUNITY INTERVIEWED:

Chuck Bianco	Chair, Art in Public Places Committee
Patricia Boyce	City of Sierra Vista, Principal Planner
William Dunn	Artist, and President, Huachuca Art Association
Lori Giangregorio	Artist
Len Roberts	City of Sierra Vista, Director of Community Services
Rosanne Rodcay	Artist
Kim Shipek	Art Teacher, Buena High School
Robert Wick	Artist, President, Wick Publishing
Dick Zoller	SVAHC Member

**B. ART IN PUBLIC PLACES COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**Chuck Bianco, Chair**

**George Michael**

**Maira Geoffrion**

**Bruce Mordhorst**

**Patricia Bovee**

**Maria Church**

**Len Roberts**

**Cheryl Astrup**

**Charles Marlowe**

**Shirley Brooks**

**Mr. E. H. Lewis**

**Robert Wick**

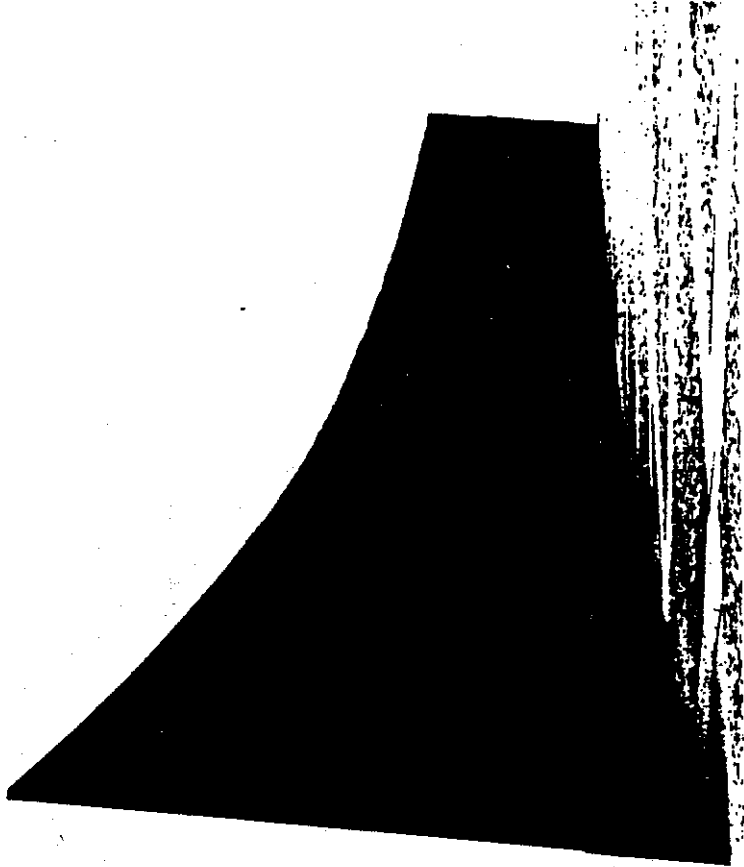
**Tom Hessler**

**Dee Dee Nevelle**

**Kim Shipek**

**Bill Taylor**

Richard Serra  
"Tilted Arc" 1981  
Federal Plaza  
New York, New York



# HOW ART BECOMES PUBLIC

by Jerry Allen  
Director, Cultural Affairs Division  
City of Dallas, Dallas, Texas © 1985

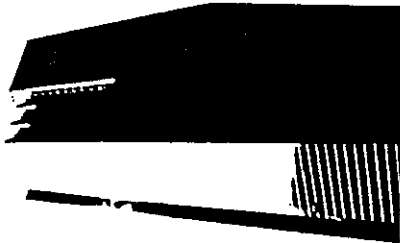
**KING COUNTY IS A PIONEER** in the field of public art. Its Percent for Art ordinance, passed in 1973, was among the first public art laws passed by any municipality in the United States and was the first such law in the Northwest. Over the years, 500 artworks by 235 artists have been commissioned or purchased. These range

in size from miniature prints to Robert Morris' four-acre earthwork and represent virtually every style and medium.

Eclectic as the collection is, it is tied by a common thread. All artwork is selected upon recommendation of a jury of arts professionals plus a person representing the community where the artwork is to be sited. Each jury takes on its own personality, and this personality is reflected in the selection. Although the artwork selected by a jury represents the highest quality to that jury, this is no guarantee of public acceptance. The Robert Morris earthwork near Kent still inspires some resentment, as it did when selected trees at the terraced site were first made into stark, blackened stumps. Making a critical statement about what man does to nature was important to Morris, but his message generally is lost on visitors to the earthwork site. The Herbert Bayer earthwork in Kent, on the other hand, is the pride of the local community which was involved at every step, including fund raising, in the development of this tranquil park.

The transformation of a public space with art can be a formidable challenge. King County has accepted this challenge as an opportunity to strengthen, in the best sense, the cultural and social life of our communities.

333 Wacker Drive  
Chicago, Illinois  
Kubin, Pedersen & Fox,  
Perkins & Will, Architects



Kenneth Callahan  
"Scraping and Painting" 1933  
Museum of History and Industry  
Seattle, Washington



took the form of religious icons, patriotic or national issues, or the great classical themes of justice, truth, beauty and liberty. art used symbolism, imagery and formal structures that were part of the visual vocabulary of the whole society. Every city has relics of this time—equestrian statues or great allegorical murals of commerce and industry. Unfortunately these aged artifacts, by virtue of their specificity, are now merely blips on the landscape, a part

of the visual clutter. They may interest us, even engage us, but they are, as British architect Richard Shaw put it, "like cut flowers, beautiful but dead."<sup>3</sup>

Artists before the modern period stayed within the narrow confines of the iconography of their time and created their art-works within the limitations of that imagery. Art commemorated great events. Art illustrated great literature. Art glorified God. Art upheld great national and civic

values. Art was created to express beliefs and value systems assumed to be correct for everyone, and revealed those beliefs and values through forms and symbols everyone could comprehend. These traditional monuments spoke a language in which the public was fluent: heroism, war, civic values clothed in classical robes, on gallant horses, and with heroic gestures. Every citizen spoke this language.

Moreover, it was widely accepted that the "meaning" of art derived not from the artist but from the society in which the artist worked. Only recently has the artist had exclusive rights to impart meaning to works of art. With no investment in the meaning of public artwork, the people began to part ways with the art. Art critic Kate Linker put it this way: "Public art's current situation is that of urges impeded by the unavailability of forms. If the 19th century closed the tradition of public art, plummeting the 20th into the private world of abstraction, it left behind no inkblots, intimations or harbingers with which to commence a successive version. The lack of a coordinated style, equivalent to the court, or 'period' manner, left no context to inform artistic expectation or insure their acceptance. Similarly, with the demise of the commemorative and communicative aims that had characterized 19th century production, no valid function inhabited the field of civic art."<sup>4</sup>

Today, public art simply cannot be analyzed by the traditional tools—iconography, styles, formal structures—to reveal

meaningful distinctions from private art. Some critics go so far as to assert that "public art is impossible. All we can ever do is put private art in public spaces."<sup>5</sup> Communal values and widely shared image" (excepting mass culture) are not sufficiently prevalent to sustain a truly public art, they allege. Public arts agencies, perhaps agreeing to some measure, have devised numerous approaches that interject largely non-aesthetic content into their art projects. Sculpture as land reclamation, functional art and ethnic collections, as well as artist residencies, all seem a response, in some measure, to the separation of the art from the people it should be serving.

While the assertion that public art is impossible goes too far, Linker's idea that civic art came into the 20th century without a valid function needs to be explored. Even accepting the notion that contemporary works in public settings must not be seen as expressions of publicly shared values, it may be possible to find important measures of public significance. Janet Kardon, Director of Philadelphia's Institute of Contemporary Art, says, "Public art is not a style or a movement but a compound social service based on the premise that public well-being is enhanced by the presence of artworks in public spaces."<sup>6</sup> Most often it has been suggested that this public benefit arises out of the palliative effect of art on contemporary architecture. Vol-umes have been written on the spiritual and aesthetic poverty of our cities due to



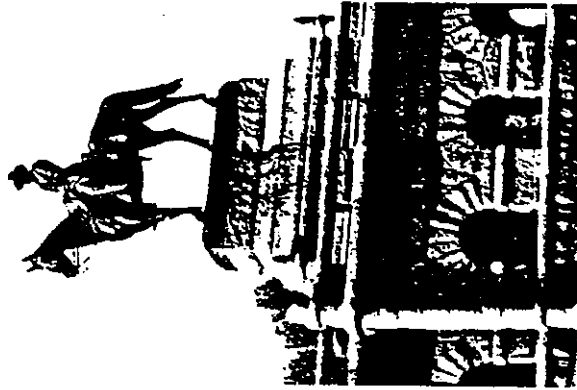
Public art is a very new phenomenon in modern terms. It is something still in the process of becoming. It does, however, seem surprising, nearly 26 years after the passage of the first Percent for Art ordinance in Philadelphia, that we still are unable to define exactly what public art is, or ought to be. What, at first glance, seems simple, becomes very complex, linguistically and conceptually. Indeed, the very notion of a "public art" is something of a contradiction in terms. In it, we join two words whose meanings are, in some ways, antithetical. We recognize "art" in the 20th Century as the individual inquiry of the sculptor or painter, the epitome of self-assertion. To that we join "public", a reference to the collective, the social order, self-negation. Hence, we link the private and the public, in a single-concept or object, from which we expect both coherence and integrity. This is no idle or curious problem but is central to an issue that has plagued public art in modern times: the estrangement of the public for whose benefit the artwork has been placed.

Herein lies the problem. Much of what we call public art simply isn't. We must acknowledge that from the beginning. The overwhelming majority of public artworks are simply private artworks—gallery or studio pieces—"slumming it" on a plaza or in the lobby of some public structure. Their traditional placement and their grand (and often exaggerated) scale give rise to the expectation that they should be public

in content, or monumental in terms other than scale. Alas, they are wolves in sheepskins. They are only big, private artworks.

Where, indeed, is the "public" in public art? Occasionally, the issue has been skirted by resorting to other language: Art in Public Places, rather than Public Art. It's a neat trick—define the art in terms of its placement. Ignore its content, its audience, or the processes by which it came into being. Unfortunately, it solves only the linguistic problem. As the critic Lawrence Alloway observed, "it takes more than an outdoor site to make a sculpture public."<sup>1</sup> If we define public art in terms of location alone, then the whole realm of visual pabulum known as "corporate art" enters the discussion. The corporate logo, magnified a thousand-fold and exploded into three dimensions by all-too-willing artists, occupied the public plaza without ever passing into the public sensibilities as art, let alone what we might expect of a public art. Likewise, a whole generation of minimalist artworks haunts public spaces as so much visual clutter without assimilation into the common visual vocabulary.

Another way of defining public art might be in terms of audience. Art becomes, one might suggest, public when it addresses a wide audience. But we live in a very large, very pluralistic society. We have no unifying religion, no great patriotic urges, no other consensus about social, political or moral values. What type of art can express the great multiplicity of this



culture? Public art addresses a context that is both broad and heterogeneous. It enters an environment which removes art from the privileged and specialized status of the museum into a much wider realm which involves entertainment, politics, urban sociology and economics. This public sphere forces art to compete with the public culture of television and mass marketing for the attention of its audience. It further competes in a milieu of "visual

cacophony" with a myriad of distractions, natural and man-made, and engages an audience with virtually no understanding of, or stake in, the artist's aesthetic.

Alloway went on to suggest that the target of public art must be "the achievement of a focusing point for an undifferentiated audience."<sup>2</sup> Attractive as that notion may be, it is probably unrealistic to expect art to serve that role in a society lacking widespread aesthetic literacy. Without the training and knowledge to evaluate and appreciate art on its own terms, it is unlikely the general public will be able to use art as a focusing and value-setting mechanism in modern society. Only the vehicles of mass culture—television, films, the educational system—seem capable of such a feat. The wide audience we expect for public art simply cannot mean "lots of people." Neither can it mean "ordinary" people, in the sense of those who are outside the art cognoscenti. Our society is too large and our citizenry too diverse for the audience for public art to be literally everybody. The question is: Can substantially fewer than everybody be the audience for public art without destroying the public character of the art? It is a question to which I shall return later.

No doubt art before the modern period could be said to be a public art, although the public did not mean everybody—usually it meant the art of the ruling class. But art did have a role in focusing, interpreting and reinforcing societal values that were commonly held by the people. Whether it

Henry Moore  
 "Mirror Knife Edge" 1977  
 National Gallery  
 Washington, D.C.



its impoverished architecture. There is no doubt the ubiquitous and repetitive "glass box" screams for amelioration. As early as 1944, William Gehron said, "we live in an era in which the tendency is to design architecture in the 'skimmed milk style,' without any cream whatsoever." The intervening 40 years have only intensified the sterility and banality of our cities. The great American migration to the suburbs, away from the central cities, has taken place in that time and must be ascribed, at least in part, to the alienating architecture of those cities.

The public art movement of the last quarter century had its origin, partially, from an impulse to correct these urban design problems. The question is, how successful has that effort been? It is not an easy question to answer. Any generalization here will be unfair to a large number of successful works, but over the last decade, there has been significant negative reaction to these attempts to use art in this therapeutic way. Its detractors refer to it as "plop art" (as in, architect designs plaza, artist plops down sculpture) It seems clear that this approach to public artmaking, however well-intentioned, has cured few of the ills of modern architecture. Even Henry Moore (whose own work has been included among those called a "turd on the plaza") has deplored the use of art as costume jewelry, pinned on a building as an embellishment, as an afterthought. We cannot expect public art to atone for, or cover

over, bad architectural design or shoddy urban planning. That aesthetic challenge is simply too great.

It is obvious that the high visibility of works of art in public places makes engagement of the non-arts public inescapable. And, as noted earlier, these works have neither the sanction of professional opinion nor the intimidating authority afforded by the museum. The artworks must engage the public on the public's terms—exposing it to vigorous, protracted and often uninformed debate. Public art represents the volatile crossroads of the artist's personal sensibilities with public notions informed by sentimental and long-abandoned approaches to art. There is a great disparity between what the public envisions and how contemporary artists actually practice their craft. The result can be the storm of controversy which sometimes swirls around even the best public art projects.

One source of this conflict lies in the public's lack of sensitivity to, and knowledge of, the art of our time. While we have, over the past 20 years, considerably extended the presence of public art in our cities, and the public acceptance of individual works, this has resulted in no appreciable increase in general comprehension. In fact, the successive assaults on the unprepared public's sense by modern art seem to have brought the situation to the limits of credulity. Hence, the outrage, the sense of hostility, the cries that the public is being hoodwinked, the claim that the

public treasury is being raided, all of the scenario which seems to accompany a lively public art controversy.

The reality is that public art is demanding. Like other fields of human knowledge and endeavor, the outer limits, the frontiers of that field where most contemporary artists choose to work, is reached only by considerable study and contemplation. Understanding is not instant. Even the well-informed need time to absorb new ideas and images. The sculptor Rodin's work, now universally loved, was reviled in his time. For that matter, even the Impressionists Monet and Renoir made a less than favorable impression in their time. When first exhibited, their work created a brouhaha; neither their peers nor the public took much pleasure in the unfamiliar work. Any truly innovative art will be slow to reveal its secrets. General appreciation is gained only with the passage of time. Recent experience with public art seems to bear this out, as public outrage gradually gives way to acceptance. Occasionally, with very successful works,

acceptance is even followed by genuine celebration. The classic case is Alexander Calder's *La Grande Vitesse*, commissioned for the civic plaza in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in 1968. The huge, red, steel sculpture was scorned by an angry public and media. Newspaper editorials denounced it. Citizen groups demanded its removal. Even congressman Gerald Ford joined the protest. Slowly the storm subsided. Slowly the public began to

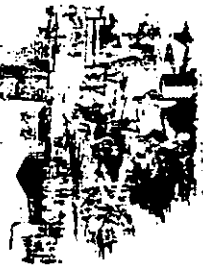
understand the work. Slowly civic pride asserted itself. Today the sculpture is an important urban symbol—a logo of the city which adorns everything from the municipal letterhead to the sides of city garbage trucks. The process of assimilation of the work into the common visual vocabulary had become complete.

Even so venerable an American symbol as the Washington monument met with a less than enthusiastic response from the public. So great were the public outcries that its construction was halted when the obelisk was only partly finished. Angry citizens dumped the stone slabs from the site into the Potomac River. For nearly 40 years the monument stood unfinished—a monument only to the tribulations of even the most well-intentioned public art project. When the sculpture finally was reappropriated by Congress, matching stone was no longer available. Today, if you look closely, you will find a change in coloration a quarter of the way up—a faint reminder of the confrontation of one artwork with its public.

We come, then, to the most difficult part of this discourse—the point of suggesting where we might go. How can the lessons of the past be used to inform the present? How do we bridge the gulf of public understanding and expectations in a more successful way? How can we ensure that the meeting of art and public will be a constructive engagement? Unfortunately, no new answers will be offered here. These problems do not lend themselves to simple

Washington Monument (under construction)  
Washington, D.C. (circa 1854)

Alexander Calder  
"Le Grande Vitesse"  
Grand Rapids, Michigan



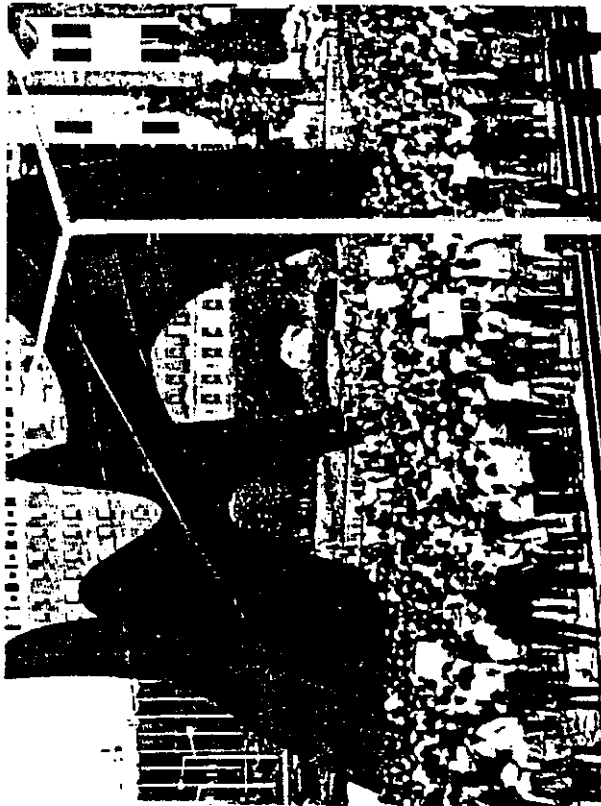
or facile solutions. There are, however, conclusions that we can draw from our experience that might guide us toward more reliable results:

1. *In general, the intellectual transactions posed by recent public art have been too private, or too esoteric, for the general public to understand.* This has implications for both the content of the art and the process by which the art reaches the public. The idea of speaking to an audience in a language foreign to them would strike us as silly. Yet every day public art goes up that attempts to do just that. If real communication is to take place, the solutions are obvious; either the work must be translated into the audience's language, or the audience must learn the artist's tongue.

Failure of these transactions can be deadly to public art. Richard Serra's "Tilted Arc", on the plaza of a federal building in downtown Manhattan, recently has been slated for relocation after several years of protests culminated in a public hearing by the General Services Administration. The irony is that Serra's work invariably means to expose and reflect its surroundings. Christopher Knight, art critic for the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, observed, "when this atrocious building and atrocious plaza opened, people weren't picketing and screaming about how awful this inhuman architecture was. No, people went in like sheep and got to work."<sup>9</sup> Serra's work reflected that cold and divisive design. The public, misinterpreting the message of the artwork,

2. *We must accept the notion that controversy is both inevitable and an acceptable part of the public art process.* Our society, and our government in particular, is predicated on the belief that controversy, and the public debate that ensues, are natural ingredients of a democracy. Most people involved in public art already accept this idea as gospel, but often they fail to take the next logical step, that public debate can be stimulated and channeled to reveal and clarify the insights of both artist and public. This process, however, takes time. We cannot expect that the public artwork is complete when the cord is pulled, the sculpture is unveiled and the politician delivers his public benediction. At the same time, when controversy does occur, we must insist that our public officials resist the temptation to exploit the situation by grandstanding for personal political gain.

3. *As a corollary, the process of assimilation of new ideas and images into the public's visual vocabulary is real and, if given time, will occur.* We must remember that there is nothing urgent about the public art business. We need not rush to judgment about a particular work. No work need be removed from display before a reasonable length of time has passed—at least five to ten years. Then it might be reasonable, even appropriate, to review a work and render a judgment as to whether it has stood the test of time. This act of reaffirming the original judgment, or deaccessioning the work after a suitable period



assuming that the medium was the message, vented their rage on the artwork itself.

Without means of putting an artwork into context, the public often focuses on the art in a negative way. Artist/critic Brian O'Doherty warned against ignoring the public and spoke of the vernacular wit which is "the unconsulted public's only remaining weapon when confronted with 'elitist' monuments."<sup>10</sup> (He was speaking

specifically of a huge smooth mound of black marble outside a San Francisco bank which quickly was dubbed "the banker's heart.") Closer to home, another Serra work, "Wright's Triangle" at Western Washington University in Bellingham, has felt the sting of public comment in the form of graffiti which once declared: "Art is best when it has been defaced—i.e. demystified."<sup>11</sup>

Richard Serra  
 "Wright's Triangle" 1979  
 Western Washington University  
 Bellingham, Washington



of time, could do much to reassure a skeptical public that they will not be stuck forever with a work they find unacceptable. However, this should not be used merely as a means of silencing public debate in the hope that no one will protest the work ten years hence. Rather, periodic review of public collections should seek to finely balance two fundamental rights: the right of the artist to free, creative expression and the equally important right of the public to accept or reject that expression in a thoughtful way.

4. The process of bridging the gap of understanding between the artist and the public through public education should be a part of every public art project. No public artwork should ever suddenly appear overnight, as if by some miraculous (or calamitous, depending on your point of view) event. Thoughtful community development must precede, accompany and follow every installation. There are several reasons for this. Partly it's to prevent unexpected changes in the public environment. One of the interesting anomalies of public

art is that while a storm may follow the installation of an artwork, a similar storm always follows the removal of any work on display for any length of time. This suggests a kind of "territoriality" people feel about the public spaces they inhabit which must be respected. It is an arrogance on the part of the artist, or the administrator working with the "owners" or users of a public space before introducing an element as intrusive as a public artwork. If anything distinguishes public art from the private, it is that the public has little choice but to be confronted by it.

Furthermore, the artist can be the greatest resource in facilitating public understanding and acceptance of the work by engaging the people as an integral part of the creative process. This positive engagement can take many forms. The artist can work directly with the users of the space to determine their expectations and, hopefully, reconcile those expectations with his vision. The public art agency can provide for lectures, or public seminars, or can arrange for an exhibition of the artist's work. The artist can even do part of the creative work "on site" to allow for a broader public conception of the artist's ways of working.

This development process should be seen as an integral part of the public art process. An interesting example of how it can work happened recently in Dallas when a sculpture commission to commemorate "Dallas Police, Past, Present

and Future" was proposed. Many thought this was an impossible task, reconciling the police' expectations to the visions of a contemporary sculptor. The expectations of the police ranged from a sentimental bronze statue of an officer helping a child across the street to a concrete squad car with a real flashing bubble on top—a kind of eternal flame to policemen! The police association agreed to a series of lectures on contemporary sculpture before the artist-selection process began. A mutual exchange of ideas between the jury and the police followed. In the end, the police association unanimously endorsed a completely non-representational work.<sup>12</sup>

5. Since no society as diverse as ours can hope to express commonly held values through its public art, we must strive to create a new public for each work. This, as does the preceding, suggests processes where the artist works directly with the users of the public space. Recognizing that every artwork must grow out of a time and a place, and that it is not necessary that everybody be the audience for a particular work, it is sufficient to engage the people who are immediately affected by the project. Some will argue that this will threaten the creative process. Inevitably, they will say, this must compromise the art. For some—those who continue to subscribe to the view that only artists can lend meaning to artworks—this process would indeed compromise the art. But there is a new breed of artists, like Scott Burton, Robert Irwin and Siah Armajani, for whom

working with the public as part of the creative process simply means getting rid of the artist's ego. Burfon says, "as a public artist, you have to work within the decorum of public taste. This requires temperamental changes... you have to be able to not identify totally with one idea." Irwin goes even farther, describing self-expression as one of the least useful artistic impulses or motivations, especially when working in public. These artists have come to regard engagement of the public as a necessary part of the process of researching and creating a public artwork.

Taken together, these observations say less about public art and its content than about the process by which art becomes public. It is imperative that we refine that process as best we can. We live in a time of extraordinary and disconcerting change. If contemporary art has any function, it is to allow us to monitor and comprehend those changes. It is the unique power of art that the shock of the new often precedes a profound understanding of the events of our lives.

1. Quoted by Benjamin Forgey, "It Takes More Than an Outdoor Site to Make Sculpture Public," *Art News*, September 1980, p. 86.
2. From an article by Suzaan Boettger, "Scenes from a Marriage: Public Art and the Public," *Newsletter of the International Sculpture Center*, July/August 1982.
3. Quoted by Barbralee Diamonstein, *Artists & Architects Collaboration*, Architectural League, 1981, p. 90.
4. Kate Linker, "Public Sculpture: The Pursuit of the Pleasurable and Profitable Paradise," *Art Forum*, March 1981, p. 68.
5. Amy Goldin, "The Esthetic Ghetto: Some Thoughts About Public Art," *Art in America*, May/June 1974, p. 32.
6. From the introduction to *Urban Encounters: A Map of Public Art in Philadelphia, 1959-1979*, by Janet Kardon, Falcon Press, Philadelphia, 1980.
7. Quoted by Kate Linker, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
8. The term "lurd on the plaza" is attributed to James Wines of SITE Inc.
9. Quoted by Tim Jahns, "Public Art Stirrs Debate," *State of the Arts*, California Arts Council, September/October 1982.
10. Brian O'Doherty, "Public Art and the Government," *Art in America*, October 1974.
11. John Beardsley, "Personal Sensibilities in Public Places," *Art Forum*, Summer 1981, p. 45.
12. William Tucker of New York was chosen to do this monument. The project did not proceed because needed private fund-raising efforts were not successful.
13. Quoted by Calvin Tompkins, "Like Water in a Glass," *The New Yorker*, March 21, 1983.

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