Public Art Primer

Aboriginal Sea Life: (Mural at Corner of Fairhope Ave. and Church Street) Funded by FEEF. Installed 2002. ARTIST: AMERI’CA JONES.

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What is public art?

1. Wikipedia—“Public art is art in any media that has been planned and executed with the intention of being staged in the physical public domain, usually outside and accessible to all. Public art is significant within the art world, amongst curators, commissioning bodies and practitioners of public art, to whom it signifies a working practice of site specificity, community involvement, and collaboration. Public art may include any art which is exhibited in a public space including publicly accessible buildings, but often it is not that simple. Rather, the relationship between the content and the audience, what the art is saying and to whom, is just as important if not more important than its physical location.”

2. OUR PAST TIMES: “Public Art includes any work displayed within public spaces, with the goal of being accessible to everyone. It could be a major exhibit featuring numerous pieces or a smaller one. Many types of art can be considered public, ranging from buildings to graffiti.”

3. Americans for the Arts: Public arts is exactly that, art in public spaces. The term “public art” may conjure images of historic bronze statues of a soldier on horseback in a park. Today, public art can include murals, sculpture, memorials, integrated architectural or landscape architectural work, community art, digital new media and even performances and festivals.”
What is art?

1981 New Collegiate Dictionary:
1) Skill acquired by experience, study or observation (art of making friends)
2) A branch of learning. (liberal arts)
3) an occupation requiring skill or knowledge (the art of French Cooking)
4) **The conscious use of skill and creative imagination in the production of aesthetic objects (works of art/fine art).**
5) A skillful plan (the quality of being artful).
6) Decorative or illustrative elements in printed matter (ex: Norman Rockwell- illustrator with very public art… but not in a public space).

English by Oxford Dictionary- internet:
1) The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. (the art of the Renaissance; ‘great art is concerned with moral imperfections’; ‘she studied art in Paris’)
2) Works produced by human creative skill and imagination. (his collection of modern art, ‘an art critic’)
3) Creative activity resulting in the production of paintings, drawings, or sculpture. (‘she’s good at art’)
4) The various branches of creative activity, such as painting, music, literature, and dance.) (‘the visual arts’, ‘the art of photography’)
5) Subjects of study primarily concerned with human creativity and social life, such as languages, literature, and history (as contrasted with scientific or technical subjects. ‘the belief that the arts and sciences were incompatible’)
6) A skill at doing a specified thing, typically one acquired through practice. (‘the art of conversation’)
Unique Features differ from public art:

The following unique features help carve out Fairhope’s identity.

- **Fairhope Pier**- 1895, 1968, 2006 (after Ivan and Katrina)
- **Fairhope Fountain** at the Pier- Developed under Jim Nix’s Administration 1973-2000)
- **Martin Houses at the Pier**- Pet Project of Garland Sims, an active citizen.
- **Rose Garden and Floral Displays**- Developed under Tim Kant’s time as a horticulturist (1986)
- **Fairhope Clock on the Plaza**- Margaret Tucker gave the clock to Fairhope in memory of her husband.
- **Arts and Crafts** Events-Started in the 1950’s (birth of Edith and Converse Harwell’s) Started as an artists walk, based on a Craig Sheldon article in 1948. Art in Hardware store windows in the 1970’s. Became an outdoor festival 1953-54.
- **Theatre 98**- Concept by Betty Jo Wolf, Martha Hill, Gretchen Rogers, and Dean’s Mother in Law
- “Community” paver sidewalks
- **History Museum** (Old City Jail)- 1927 as a jail, 2006 designed for a history museum.
- **Flower Clock on Veterans Drive**
- **Community Park**
Small Insignificant images that we walk by every day without thought resonate with tourists and artists in ways we can’t imagine:
Iconic Images/Historic Images:

Image used with permission by artist, Joey Blazek
An artist’s view can change our perception of what is valuable:

Image used with permission by the artist, Joey Blazek
Simplified definition of art and public art:

Quoted from Elizabet Elliot Curator of Programs for the MMOA.

“ART IS A COMMUNICATION TOOL.
Artists take the world they are in (politics, economy, social, cultural) and interpret them.”

My definition of Public Art

Public Art is a creative communication tool, prepared with the intention of being staged and located in a public space, open and accessible to the general public, which means “everyone”.
History Fun Fact:
The 1st domestic Public Art Programs started as a part of the New Deal, with the formation of the Treasury Department’s Section of Painting and Sculptures in 1934. One percent of each federal building’s cost was to be reserved for artistic decoration. The reason: to build morale, create jobs (you need someone to construct, install and maintain these often enormous works) and reduce crime.

“What distinguishes public art is the unique association of how it is made, where it is, and what it means. Public art can express community values, enhance our environment, transform a landscape, heighten our awareness, or question our assumptions. Placed in public sites, this art is there for everyone, a form of collective community expression. Public art is a reflection of how we see the world – the artist’s response to our time and place combined with our own sense of who we are.” Assoc. for Public art.
Best Argument for Public Art:

1) Improves Quality of Life and Liveability
2) Competitive Edge in a globally competitive economy and it helps attract cultural savvy community investors.
Quality of Life Examples:

- **SOCIAL CONNECTIONS:**

  Sky bridge Public Art Project in Minneapolis, Minnesota helped with social diversity issues.
Quality of Life: Helps with Physical Connections
New York City Waterfalls Public Art Project:
Examples:

- **PHYSICAL CONNECTIONS:** Waterfalls- connecting public spaces Brookyn & Manhattan
  - Mayor: $15.5 million to erect it. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and other “Waterfalls” enthusiasts- estimated $55 million in economic activity during its run.
    
    “That amounts to about 0.09 percent of the $59.1 billion budget city officials agreed upon hours after the water began to cascade under the Brooklyn Bridge on Thursday — roughly the amount generated by a single World Series game during the Subway Series in 2000.”
  
  - President of the New York City Economic Development Corporation: approx. 10,000 people will come from out of town specifically to visit the “Waterfalls” over three months (7,500 from the US, 2,500 from other countries. Estimated 76,000 people from the New York metropolitan area are expected to make special day trips to glimpse the installation Total of 86,000.

- **Citizen Concerns:** Concerns over wildlife affected by the project.

- **Benefits:** Social connections between physical neighborhoods, increased tourism, increase in economic activity, was successful Because three more were built and now they are being done in France.

- **Controversial Issues of NY Water Element Projects (1969 project ended 1987):**
  - Effects of fecal coliform spray-from East River-raised health dept concerns
  - Effect of chlorine spray-damaged a stand of pine trees.
  - Occasional failure of the system.
  - Vandalism
Examples:

- **CULTURAL CONNECTIONS:**

  - **Marietta Johnson Memorial:** (South Mobile Street on Bluff)
  - **Veteran’s Memorial:** (Henry George Park)
WHY IS INCORPORATING ART AND CULTURE INTO COMMUNITY AN IMPORTANT PLANNING CONCEPT?

It provides a Competitive Edge

CREATIVE ECONOMY, CREATIVE CLASS, AND CULTURAL ECONOMY

Activities of art and the cultural sector and local economic vitality are becoming interconnected!

- Improves a communities competitive edge attracting high caliber businesses.
- Creates a foundation for defining a sense of place.
- Attracts new and visiting populations.
- Integrates the visions of community and business leaders.
- Contributes to a skilled workforce.
- Can improve public safety.
Creative Economic Strategies for Communities:

1. **Facility centric**: development of an arena, a cultural center, or incubator facility.

2. **People-oriented**: facilitating art professionals’ development by approving live-work spaces, supporting art centers, creating cooperative marketing opportunities, or commissioning artworks.

3. **Program-based**: target a specific issue within a community, such as developing an arts program (whether its gardening, mural making or **public arts displaying**)
Economically successful public art projects:

- **Chicago and New York Cows on Parade (2000)** - three-month exhibit: 2 million visitors to Chicago, with tourists spending approximately $500 million on hotels, food, and sightseeing. One retail store reported a $40,000 profit over its weekly projections due to thousands of additional tourists. Other retail shops, restaurants and hotels reported a 20% increase in sales.

  NY- Boosted visitors by 3-4 million visitors with an additional $1 billion in revenues for local businesses. $1,351,000 was raised at the Charity Auction (supporting dozens of New York Charities). The average cow sold for $18,250, with the largest bid of $60,000.

- **The District 7 headquarters of the California DOT (Caltrans) (2004)** - 1% of project budget was mandated for public art. Integrated the art program into the building design itself. $2 million budget-used neon and argon filled tubes that abstractly resembled the car tail lights. It became a sensation. The building is now used frequently as a backdrop for feature films, television shows, commercials, etc. Caltrans receives an income stream by licensing the entry plaza as a backdrop for still photography and tv/film.

- **Transportation Project (2011-2014)**: "A major three-year light rail construction project through the heart of St Paul, Minnesota, could have been a major hardship for city residents and small businesses along the route. Irrigate, however, mobilized the skills and power of more than 600 local artists to offset the impact of the construction with more than 150 place-making art projects, turning disrupted neighborhoods into destinations. These projects included murals, performances in restaurants and parking lots, plus giant puppets that acted as business signage. These projects created a positive counter-narrative of joy, surprise and commitment to the communities in the construction zone." Laura Zabel-Springboard for the Arts.

Planting Creativity: Artists, Place & Transit Video
“Miss Fairhope” by Carol Sailor located on the Fairhope History Museum during the 2011 “Jumping Jubilee” Public Art Project
Intangibles:

- Visual narrative of your City’s story or ideals
- Cultural Interpretation
- Education
- Inspiration
- General Improvement of Urban Environment.
- Bringing your community together to create a vision.
- Making your town interesting, unique separating it from other communities when every town has a Target, Dollar General, Starbucks.
- Aesthetic beauty
Points of View to a Public Arts Project

1. **The Artist:** “Artist’s are your makers of art, but also your critical thinkers.”
   - Problem solvers:
   - Permanent or temporary, creative statement, working on a grand scale in relation to multiple audiences. Often the location or space influences the art.

2. **The Commissioning Agency/Agencies:**
   - Connecting the imaginative potential of the artist with the lived experience of “public” environment.

3. **The Publics:**
   - An Occasion to engage with a unique creative form and reflect on the circumstances, freedoms and constraints, of the spaces we deem public.
**Article: Why We Love and Need Public Art**
(taken from www.forbes.com 05/05/2009, State of the City opinions by Raquel Laneri, assistant news editor at Forbes:

- It breaks up the monotonous and sometimes oppressive nature of city working life.
- It can provide a new way to experience a City.
- It can provide a way for separate parts of a City to be united visually *and socially*. (example Cascading Waterfalls with blue and fluorescent lighting- situated between Manhattan and Brooklyn.)
- Public art loosely refers to the 4 M’s: murals, monuments, memorials and mimes.
- It is a reflection of our ideals and values (*if managed appropriately*).
- Public Art Programs is a way to bring cultural tourism into a city.
- It improves our quality of life, because it makes us stop and open our eyes.

Dolphin Family: (South Mobile Street at the Orange Street Pier)
FUNDING PUBLIC ART PROJECTS:

- One percent of total costs for construction, renovation, and capital improvement projects go for public art at that project site, or if eligible, at other desirable public art sites.
- Private donor contributions.
- Volunteer projects - community art projects - like the Fairhopers Community Park at the corner of Morphy and Church St.

HOW TO LOCATE PUBLIC ART?

ALL public art is site-specific, even if it seems like it can go anywhere it's meaning will change based on where you site it. This is your FIRST STEP. You won't know what kind of public art you want until you know what site or sites it would be for.
ELEMENTS OF PUBLIC ART PROJECTS:

- Site Selection: CRITICAL ELEMENT as it is an integral element for the artist
- Fund raising.
- Community vision.
- Solicit and commission the art done by a qualified jury consisting of artists or those knowledgeable about the arts, the project architect or builder, appropriate representatives of the community and users of the new structure, and representatives of the town government and Public Art Commission or Group.
- Installation of the artwork.
- Education of the public about the artwork.
- Maintenance and conservation over time.
- Administration of the program.
Steps to Public Arts Projects:
The steps to a specific project are dependent on what sort of public art project you are mounting, but here are steps you can take to figure that out:

**Step 1: Identify possible public art spaces and sites throughout the city.**
---Key questions- What are key walking paths that are already active? What are potential walking paths or places you’d like to drive more foot traffic to? Are there stopping points on existing routes that could work better? Are there blighted areas or areas that feel bare or neglected?

**Step 2: Identify what stories your city would like to tell**
  a. current residents
  b. new visitors
  (this gives you an entry point to the content and goals of your public art)

**Step 3: Identify potential community partners and interested parties-**
  There an organization or group that seems like a natural investor in a space or concept?
  What immediate community will this project directly impact? Do they have a voice in the project?

**Step 4: Feasibility studies on specific sites and potential projects.**
  - sightlines
  - ground stability
  - weather
  - risk and permanence
  - potential upkeep needed
  - interaction
  - is there a utilitarian need at this site? (bike parking, shade, seating etc.)
Fairhope Public Art:

Temporary Projects: 4 Projects

- Pelican Project (2007)
  Craig Sheldican: (Single Tax Corp. Fairhope, Alabama) COPA funded-
  Art Takes Flight project. Installed 2007. ARTIST: DEAN MOSHER OF
  FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA. Meaning: Created in honor of Dean’s father-in-
  law (Craig Sheldon).
  Courier Pelican: copa funded- art takes flight project. installed
  2007. ARTIST: MEGREZ RUDOLF OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA.
  This art project funded the “Mullet” Run Public Art Project behind
  the Fairhope History Museum.

- Poppy Project for Veterans
- Yarn Bomb (Sept. 2016)
Fairhope Public Art:

Permanent “Public” Projects: 13 Projects

- **Elan Vital**: (corner of Section St. and Oak St.)- installed 2003. A COPA project. ARTIST: JOHN MEDWEDEFF OF CARBONDALE, ILL.

- **Sea Horse**: (South Mobile Street on Bluff) Funded by FEEF, ARTIST: BRUCE LARSEN AND JOHN REZNER.

- **Dolphin Family**: (South Mobile Street at the Orange Street Pier) Art Patrons and COPA funded project. Installed 2005. ARTIST: JIM SARDONIS OF RANDOLF, Vt. Materials: 6-foot bronze piece resting on a 3 foot slab of Bahama Blue Granite. (The granite was a memorial gift by family and friends of a loved one).

- **April**: (Welcome Center on Section Street)-installed 2003. Funded by local art patrons. ARTIST: JO HESS OF MOBILE, ALABAMA.

- **Craig Sheldon**: (Behind History Museum on Bancroft)-installed 2008. Privately funded by COPA donations. ARTIST: STEPHEN SPEARS OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA.

- **Marietta Johnson Memorial**: (South Mobile Street on Bluff) A gift by Marietta Johnson Museum, Dedicated in 1997. ARTISTS: FRAN NEUMAN, BARBARA CASEY AND RICHARD ARNOLD.
Fairhope Public Art:

- **Mullet Run**: (Behind History Museum on Bancroft) - installed 2009. Competition project privately funded by COPA. ARTIST: AMERI’CA JONES OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA

- **Pavers around the Mullet Run**: (Behind History Museum on Bancroft) - Funded by Citizens purchasing bricks. Clay is indigenous to Baldwin County. ARTIST: JOHN REZNER OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA

- **Generating Readers**: (Public Library) COPA Purchase Prize from exhibitors at the 2007 Alabama Sculptures at Eastern Shore Art Center. ARTIST: BRAD MORTEN OF BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA

- **Celebration of Life**: (Corner of Bancroft St. and Fairhope Ave.) Installed in 1990. ARTIST: CRAIG SHELDON OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA. Meaning: Represents the return of the Pelican.

- **Sea Horse**: (South Mobile Street on Bluff) Funded by FEEF, ARTIST: BRUCE LARSEN AND JOHN REZNER.

- **Fairhope Flower Clock**: (Veteran’s Drive) Project by City of Fairhope and COPA. Installed Nov. 2013. DESIGNER: PAUL FONTENOT.

- **Veteran’s Memorial**: (Henry George Park) Funded by the City of Fairhope and a special commissioned committee (not COPA).

- **A Fairhope’s Vision - “A Fair Hope of Success** (Inside the Fairhope History Museum)
  Artist: Dean Mosher
Fairhope Public Art:

Permanent “Community”: 6 Projects

- **Aboriginal Sea Life**: (Mural at Corner of Fairhope Ave. and Church Street) Funded by FEEF. Installed 2002. ARTIST: AMERICA JONES.

- **Metal Flowers**: (Oak Street in front of Eastern Shore Art Center). Privately funded. ARTIST: WILLIAM COLBURN OF FAIRHOPE, ALABAMA.

- **Bottle Tree (aka Totem Pole)**: (Oak Street in front of ESAC) ARTISTS: STUDENTS OF JOAN ROSS OF FAIRHOPE.

- **Lunar Response**: (N. Section Street on Hill behind ESAC). Private Gift. ARTIST: WILLIAM KEATING

- **Alligator**: (Hwy 98 Thomas Hospital Patient Check In) Funded by Thomas Hospital and COPA) ARTIST: BRUCE LARSON OF FAIRHOPE.

- **FISH**: (Hwy 98 Thomas Hospital Patient Check In) Funded by Thomas Hospital and COPA) Installed 2005. ARTIST: BRUCE LARSON OF FAIRHOPE. Materials: Found Objects.

- **Two Herons**: (ESAC-Oak Street) McLean Family Memorial Gift given to COPA. ARTIST: WALTER MATIA OF DICKERSON, MD.

- **Diversity**: (On front lawn of ESAC) Gift to COPA. Installed 2009. ARTIST: LEONARD CAVE OF ORANGEBURG, SC.

- **Hope Project**: (Twin Beech Road)
Public Art at Fairhoper's Community Park
Fairhope History Museum Public Art

Founders Vision - “A Fair Hope of Success
Artist: Dean Mosher

Craig Sheldon
Artist: Stephen Spears
Public Art Fairhope inside the History Museum

Boat and Sun Art Pieces  by Jake Williamson

Created by Bruce Larsen
Bluff above the Fairhope Pier: Fairhope Single Tax Monument

Welcome Center
"APRIL"
By Jo Hess
Iconic Images/Unique Features:

Pier Martin Houses

Seating at South Beach Park at the Fairhope Pier

Landscape features at City Hall
The Importance of Public Art

**Veteran’s Memorial:** (Henry George Park) Funded by the City of Fairhope and a special commissioned committee.
“PUBLIC ART is a public good.” Darren Walker, Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation and Vice Chairman of the Foundation for Art and Preservation in Embassies. “It is the embodiment of the American ideal; in spirit and deed it is a reflection of our democratic values.

“It is impossible to have a society that is civil and educated without public art. It lifts up humanity and challenges the individual who encounters it to think differently about the world.” Raquell Lareri, Assistant News Editor at Forbes.

“Paying for Public Art is not an expense; it is an investment in the future of Amherst, Ma.” “Places with strong public art expressions break the trend of blandness and sameness, and give communities a stronger sense of place and identity.” Amherst Public Art Commission