
FINANCE AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND COUNCILLORS*

SUBJECT: BURNABY ART GALLERY SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS PROJECT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council approve the use of Gaming Reserve Funds in the amount of \$336,000 (inclusive of HST) for a three year special exhibitions project.
2. THAT an expenditure of \$112,000 (inclusive of HST) be allocated for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

REPORT

The Finance and Civic Development Committee, at its meeting held on 2011 June 21, received and adopted the *attached* report providing an update on the three year Burnaby Art Gallery Project and seeking funding for another three years.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor D. Johnston
Chair

Councillor N. Volkow
Vice Chair

Councillor C. Jordan
Member

Copied to:	City Manager Director Parks, Recr. & Cult. Services Director Finance
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TO: CHAIR AND MEMBERS
FINANCE AND CIVIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE

DATE: 2011 June 17

FROM: DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: BURNABY ART GALLERY SPECIAL EXHIBITIONS PROJECT

PURPOSE: To secure resources for a three year special exhibitions project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the Finance and Civic Development Committee request Council approval for the use of Gaming Reserve funds in the amount of \$336,000 (inclusive of HST) for a three year special exhibitions project.
2. THAT an expenditure of \$112,000 (inclusive of HST) be allocated for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

REPORT

At the Finance and Civic Development Committee meeting of 2011 May 12, the Committee inquired about an update on the three year Burnaby Art Gallery Project and requested that an investigation be conducted into the feasibility and advisability of extending the Burnaby Art Gallery project for another three years, and report back to the Committee.

BACKGROUND

In 2008 Burnaby City Council approved the use of \$315,000 (inclusive of GST) of Gaming Reserve Funds for a three year special exhibitions pilot project at the Burnaby Art Gallery. The funds were applied at \$105,000 per year over the years 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Each of the three years of the pilot project included several exhibitions that explored and presented works of art related to specific themes. The project provided extraordinary opportunities to engage the artistic community, expose the permanent collection and to interpret and exhibit works of art in the gallery and in the community.

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The mandate of the institution is to foster knowledge and understanding of contemporary and historic works of art on paper through exhibitions that address social, political and cultural issues with work created by local, regional and international artists and situates historic art within contemporary frameworks; web-based initiatives, fine art, education and outreach programs that encourage inter-generational dialogue about and engagement with visual art; publications that demonstrate understanding and stimulating ways to connect with and think about exhibitions; library and collection services that promote increased access to information about artists and their work exhibited at the Burnaby Art Gallery and within the City of Burnaby Permanent Art Collection.

ANALYSIS

Objectives

The project was designed to incorporate the key curatorial objectives in each of the three years. The curatorial objectives applied were:

- To provide opportunities and access to contemporary and historical Canadian art for diverse audiences.
- To present and interpret works from the permanent collection based on contemporary themes.
- To engage guest curators to advance ideas and theories behind contemporary artists works.
- To involve emerging, mid-career, and senior artists in exhibition development.
- To provide and foster opportunities for visual artists to develop their practice.

These objectives were engaged through three phases of the project over a three year period.

Phase I – Visioning Community: Roles of an Artist

The central theme to the Burnaby Art Gallery's 2009 exhibition projects was based on the multiplicity of roles that an artist plays within his/her community. Though a diversified program that includes emerging, local, regional and nationally based artists, the gallery developed a series of exhibition projects that investigated and engaged viewers on various levels related to the function of an artist within their community and the communities that they exhibit in. The roles explored included collaborator, recycler, mentor, visionary, chronicler and activist. The gallery envisioned ways in which the artist serves and is integrated into the communities in which they exhibit and do their work as well as challenge the preconceived ideas and myths that surround the historical and contemporary artist related to the objectives of their work within a community art museum context. Funding allowed for the following curatorial projects to be developed:

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- *Aganetha Dyck: Collaborations*
- *I-Dent: Constructing and Deconstructing Personal and Social Identities*
- *Robert Young: Quotidian View*
- *Gordon Smith: The Printed Pictures*

Phase II – Presenting Local Expressions: The World at Home

In 2010 exhibitions explored the relationship between global issues within the context of the local artist and their communities. Resonance was central to the theme and how the artist expresses him/her self within the contexts of issues such as the environment and global warming, war, globalization and nationalism. The community was engaged through creating local dialogues related to the issues raised, and through school and fine art programs, publications and presentations. By employing “blogs” and related social media, the Gallery expanded the local discussion to a broader audience as well. Funding allowed for the following curatorial projects to be developed:

- *FAX*
- *The Intertidal Zone: Prints by Doug Guildford*
- *David Kidd: Who Needs Art with a View Like This?*

Phase III – Collaborative Networks: Art, Artists, and the Museum

The thematic approach to the Burnaby Art Gallery’s 2011 curatorial projects is centered on collaboration and the various ways in which the term is used, explored and made manifest through the artists’ works, art museum exhibitions, publications and programs. Through involving local, regional and national artists in group and solo exhibitions the gallery interpreted and shared the experiences of artists working in collaborations with other artists and their communities and how they created artwork relevant to their practice as well as those of the collaborators. The gallery forged new relationships and connections with diverse communities, art practices and artists and in turn relayed the discoveries to the community. Funding allowed for the following curatorial projects to be developed:

- *Sybil Andrews*
- *Community Spotlight: The Artwork of Arnold Shives*
- *The Solitudes of Place: Recent Drawings by Ann Kipling*
- *Chance Operations² - Collaborative works on paper by Rhonda Neufeld and Rodney Konopaki*
- *Chronicles of Form and Place: Works on Paper by Takao Tanabe*

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Opportunities and Successes

The pilot project was an important undertaking for the Burnaby Art Gallery. The exhibitions, publications, national tours and online components provided the gallery with the opportunity to stabilize its funding base and build its curatorial and museological capacity enabling it to:

- Demonstrate its leadership within the art gallery/museum field related to works of art on paper by research, exhibit and publish intellectually stimulating resources related to important Canadian artists. Partnerships developed with ICI – Independent Curators International and the Drawing Centre from New York City, Carleton University Gallery, Moose Jaw Art Gallery and Museum, Medicine Hat Art Gallery, McMaster Museum of Art, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, University of Lethbridge Art Gallery and the Vancouver Art Gallery.
- Provide art gallery/museum visitors/patrons/school groups/fine art program participants with interactive and challenging programs that sought to engage and provide multiple access points to contemporary and historical works of art. Gallery tours and talks by authors Ian Thom, Rosemarie Tovell and artists Aganetha Dyck, Robert Young and Doug Guildford and an interactive panel discussion around issues raised through the I-Dent show.
- Critically engage artist's work through texts by a series of professional artists, critics and curators in order to contextualize the artist's work through multiple lenses including historical, critical, cultural and sociological. Guest authors over this three period included Ian Thom, Senior Curator – Historical, Vancouver Art Gallery, Rosemarie Tovell, former prints and drawings curator National Gallery of Canada, Robin Laurence, art critic and independent curator, and Roger Boulet, independent curator.
- Continue its work in presenting artists' work within a web-based context for those unable to attend the exhibition(s). The development of web exhibitions accessed through the art gallery's site.
- Create new audiences for the Burnaby Art Gallery throughout the nation by encouraging alternative venues for exhibition. Partnerships with the McMaster Museum of Art, Kelowna Art Gallery, and the Nanaimo Art Gallery.
- Work with key institutions including the Vancouver Art Gallery, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, McMaster University Gallery, University of Lethbridge Art Gallery, Kamloops Art Gallery, among others to expand the critical and artistic reach of the institution through the development of relationships that includes loan agreements and research.
- Cultivate lenders and donors to the museum through the borrowing of work from private collections. This included private donors (who wished to remain anonymous) from across the region.

This project has also provided the Burnaby Art Gallery with opportunities to strengthen the cultural fabric of the region by:

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- Providing access to original works of art by some of Canada's most distinguished visual artists through the exhibition program and online components.
- Providing students and public program participants the opportunity to create artwork through in-house public and school programs.
- Educating youth on the benefits of exploring contemporary issues through art and art education activities through career training and internship programs.
- Providing a stimulus for further art education and learning through public forums.
- Building new audiences and appreciation for various art forms and practices through travelling exhibitions, publications, family and school programs.
- Providing the opportunity for advanced and ongoing art education for students, teachers and the general public through advanced training sessions and in-services.
- Promoting the understanding of contemporary art practice and methods of expression through didactics, publications, tours and free public programs.
- Working with curators from across the nation to build important contemporary and art historical projects through such projects as FAX, Chance Operations, Invention and Revival: the Colour Drypoints of David Milne and John Hartman, and *Chronicles of Form and Place: Works on Paper by Takao Tanabe*.
- Working with a diverse range of scholars and writers to develop challenging and relevant texts that engage the public and diverse audiences such as Rosemarie Tovell, Ihor Holubizky, Robert Belton, Ian Thom and Josephine Mills.

In summary, the pilot project has yielded significant results and has demonstrated how the additional resources have made extraordinary projects possible. The benefits have been wide-reaching and illustrate the capacity of the institution is broadened and more recognized than previously. Further the engagement of more students and the public in Burnaby has provided for more points of contact and an increase in repeat visits and inquiries.

FUTURE PROJECTS

The establishment of a second three year special exhibitions project is advisable based on the successes of the pilot project. The 2012-2104 term will provide for the investigation of new themes and enhance opportunities to include new partners and audiences.

Future Projects and Curatorial Initiatives: 2012-2014

The opportunities and successes achieved by the 2009-2011 pilot project represents a series of benchmarks for the gallery to measure itself against. Developing institutional capacity within the curatorial and museum services program areas continues to be a priority for the Burnaby Art Gallery. Over the next three years, with the assistance of gaming reserve funds, the gallery proposes to increase its capacity through the following curatorial themes:

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Thematic A: The Artist's Idea: Concepts, Protest and Representation

Over the course of 2012 the gallery's exhibition program will critically engage the ideas behind artwork created by a diverse range of locally, nationally and internationally recognized artists. Through idea centered programming that includes lectures, discussions, hands-on activities and web-based interactive initiatives the gallery shall engage its audiences through a multitude of platforms. How ideas are translated into artwork that address historical and contemporary cultural and social issues in relation to individual and collective representations will be the foundation of the exhibition program throughout the 2012 season.

Thematic B: Visual Culture: The Printed Image as Symbol

The visual image has become a powerful instrument within Western culture to represent, persuade, and engage people in relation to ideas, products and lifestyles. The 2013 exhibition program at the Burnaby Art Gallery seeks to explore aspects of some contemporary visual culture elements such as the traditional poster, newspaper, the "zine", and the fine art print, in relation to the media and how it provides a platform for discourse in relation to the body and its representation within contemporary cultural frameworks (locally, regionally and nationally). How we, as a society, interact visually represents the main focus of this year's exhibitions.

Thematic C: Contemporary Expressions: The Role of Diverse Constituencies in the Art Museum

The modern art museum can perform many roles within the community. It can be a place of knowledge, history, discovery, gathering, amazement, exploration or protest. Programming the institution to address audience concerns and engage its constituencies is paramount in developing a diverse, focused, and representative institution. The third year of funding at the Burnaby Art Gallery will allow the institution to develop exhibitions which seek to engage and address issues and ideas brought forward and in collaboration with community partners. Providing a space for the development of projects and discourse between different constituencies allows the gallery to increase its interactions and resonance with non-traditional audiences.

CONCLUSION

Developing institutional capacity will be the primary focus of the curatorial program over the next three years. The themes outlined above represent the tactics the gallery will engage with to expand its presence and relevance within the local, regional and national art museum community. Through increased capacity the Burnaby Art Gallery will achieve greater recognition within and outside of its traditional audience as well as develop new relationships and connections. Increased sustainability will be achieved through diversified engagement practices and through collaborative working environments initiated through these projects.

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The Gaming Reserve Fund is used for arts and cultural projects as well as for heritage, environment and public safety. Positive results have been achieved from the pilot project, and a consideration of a new project term is recommended.

It is therefore recommended that the Finance and Civic Development Committee request Council approval of a three year project of \$336,000 (inclusive of HST) allocated in 2012, 2013 and 2014 at \$112,000 (inclusive of HST) annually. It is further recommended that a review be conducted of the three year special curatorial projects at project's end.



Dave Ellenwood
DIRECTOR PARKS, RECREATION & CULTURAL SERVICES

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