

Arts and Culture

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie **RPSC**

Cities throughout North America are enriching their communities through public art, often with the participation of residents in a community building process.

Vancouver Wins Cultural Capital of Canada Designation

On May 8th, 2003 Canadian Heritage Minister Sheila Copps announced that the City of Vancouver has been designated the first Cultural Capital of Canada in the big city category. This newly established juried Award recognizes excellence in municipal cultural planning and practice, and provides for matching funding to facilitate new cultural initiatives.

Vancouver will receive up to \$500,000 in federal matching funds toward two new Creative City Celebrations scheduled for the spring of 2004: the first annual Vancouver Arts Awards—recognizing the year's outstanding achievements in the creative sector—and, a waterfront festival based in and around False Creek, celebrating Vancouver's connections to the Sea. These events are currently in development.

The City's Role

Every year a wide range of arts and cultural activities and events take place in Vancouver, from large-scale outdoor spectacles like the Illuminares Lantern Festival at Trout Lake to intimate indoor chamber music concerts in theatres and churches. City Council, through the Office of Cultural Affairs, provides funds for a series of arts programs including cultural grants, public art, and cultural facilities. City Council also approves funds for the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation, which delivers

arts and cultural programming at community centres and other neighbourhood organizations.

The Public Art Program

Vancouver's Public Art Program was approved by City Council in 1990 to improve both the quality of Vancouver's public life through public art contributions. Projects initiated through the Program express the spirit, values, visions, and poetry of places that collectively define Vancouver. The Public Art Program encourages art-making of many kinds, from single-artist commissions to collaborations with engineers, architects, and neighbourhood groups.

The Public Art Program has three main components:

The Civic Program develops public art for new or existing City buildings, infrastructure projects (like streets, bridges, utility works), parks and other public spaces.

The Private Development Program requires major, privately rezoned developments to allocate \$.95 per buildable square foot to art in public areas. This funding formula is similar to private sector "percent for art" programs in other cities.

The Community Program invites artists and residents to collaborate on the design and implementation of community-based public artworks for local sites. This program is often used by neighbourhood organizations to bring together residents and enhance neighbourhood identity.

A Public Art Committee appointed by City Council advises on most Public Art Program issues.

Cultural Grants

Through its Office of Cultural Affairs, the City of Vancouver offers a range of grant programs in support of the performing, visual, literary and media arts.

Cultural Grant programs include: Operating; Project; Diversity Initiatives; Theatre Rental; Baxter Fund Rental Grants; Community Public Art; Organizational Development and Capital Grants. As well, the office administers the Celebration Grants program and the Transit Shelter Advertising Program.

Every year the City supports the cultural activities of over 150 not-for-profit organizations throughout Vancouver, including the Vancouver Art Gallery, the Children's Festival, and Asian Heritage Month. In 2003, Council approved the allocation of approximately \$1.4 million in direct cultural operational and project grants.

City Council also sustains the city-owned Vancouver Museum, Maritime Museum and Space Sciences Centre, and provides for the operation of the Orpheum, Queen Elizabeth, and Playhouse Theatres.

Details of grant programs and copies of the Cultural Affairs Annual Report are available at www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/oca and staff welcome phone calls at (604) 871-6000.

The Park Board Artist in Residence Program

Each year a limited number of community centres host Artist in Residence projects. Although traditionally, residencies require an artist to live at a designated location, the term 'residence' in this program refers to the artist's commitment to and consideration of the people, places, and issues in the community.

During the residency, each artist establishes a presence at the sponsoring community centre. Depending on the nature of the projects, their presence can take many forms including teaching, leading workshops, or working out of a studio. The intention and desire is that there will be a lasting local impact or 'legacy' from the projects, whether it involves a new understanding of the creative process, or an artwork which in some form remains in the community.

The Artist in Residence program is funded by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation in partnership with local community centre associations.

For more information about this program, contact (604) 257-8495.

The Park Board Neighbourhood Matching Fund

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund reimburses expenses up to \$10,000 to groups who wish to improve parks or other public spaces.

Examples of projects are:

- greening a street-end
- building a community fence
- working with a ceramic artist to build creative benches
- creating murals
- developing natural or historical interpretation
- starting a banner program
- building an information kiosk, etc.

A contribution equal to the amount requested from the fund must be provided by the community. Types of projects funded in the past include creating murals and banners, community "greening", and working with local artists to build creative walkways.

The Neighbourhood Matching Fund is a program of the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation and is funded through the Capital Plan. It is the key program that supports the efforts of Vancouver residents to plan and directly participate in improving public space. Since it was initiated in 1993, the program has funded 92 different projects with a total of \$321,929.

For more information about this program, call (604) 257-8495.

The School Board Artist in Residence Program

This successful program is operated with matched funding from Cultural Services, Vancouver Foundation and Vancouver School Board. The goal is to bring professional artists into the classroom for approximately six sessions to do hands on workshops with students in the areas of drama, dance, music and visual art.

During the 2002 - 2003 school year the program funded 87 artists working with teachers and students at 75 elementary and high schools across the city. For more information, call (604) 713-5206.

Arts and Cultural Facilities and Activities in RPSC

Appropriate cultural facilities are essential to any community and key to the economic health of any city. These facilities serve residents, attract tourists, maintain businesses, and enhance our quality of life.

The Riley Park Community Centres offers some visual art programs for all ages. Contact (604) 257-8545 for more details.

There are several Community Halls located in the RPSC area that support performance and rehearsal spaces. Cambrian Hall, at 215 East 17th Avenue, Capri Hall, at 3925 Fraser Street and Heritage Hall at 3102 Main Street. As well as the Polish Community Centre, at 4015 Fraser Street. See <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/cgi-win/pafacility/facility.exe> for contact information.

Public Art in RPSC

The Welcoming Wall was created in 1999, located at Riley Park Community Centre. Artist Joey Mallett developed the composition after extensive consultation with the Centre's many groups of seniors, youth and families, including ESL communities, who participated in art workshops and contributed drawings and ideas. In 1998, he also painted a community mural on the mid-Main Community Health Center at 3998 Main St. Images are of children playing and people walking, representing the different cultural groups in the community.

There are several public art works located along the Ridgeway Greenway and John Street pedestrian thoroughway, marking the bikeway paths and adding pedestrian interests to the routes.

In Cartier Park, the baseball diamond backdrop had been enhanced with the "stage" like backdrop create by Todd Davis, Karen Kazmer, Mark Grady.

Queen Elisabeth Park has several public art sculptures. The Knife Edge, created by Henry Moore in 1969 is one of the focal points in the park. Another work of art created by S. Seward Johnson Jr. called the Photo Session is located beside the Bloedel Conservatory lookout overlooking Anniversary Quarry Garden.

In 2000, the Community Labyrinth mosaic project was created at the Percy Norman pool. Designed by Artist Judy McNaughton, area residents explored and created tile images from ideas of what community meant to them. The labyrinth follows a simple design radiating outward from a central core.

The Douglas Park's Community Centre is located in a large expanse of parkland, including an extensive children's playground. The Community Quilt project was facilitated by Artist Donna McCrea. The Quilt's 22 squares was created by women who live in the neighbourhood. The images show children and family activities, and many of the squares feature three-dimensional and other complex fabric techniques and effects.

The five park benches were designed by Celine Rich's. There are many copper plaques imbedded in the bench. The plaques were the result of workshops with area residents and neighbourhood schools. A total of 600 plaques were created, with more than 100 imbedded into each concrete bench.

The Community Quilt and decorated park benches were created in 1995.

In 2001, Artist Pat Beaton worked with Community Centre patrons to create twelve hand-painted banners. These hang from the Douglas Park Community Centre's gymnasium ceiling, depicting neighbours and centre users 'in action'.

Sources

- Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Vancouver
- Vancouver Park Board
- Vancouver School Board