

June 17, 2024

RE: Deaccession of FLOW artwork at the Mount Pleasant Community Centre

Background

FLOW is a multimedia projection artwork developed by Fiona Bowie and Sidney Fels, installed at the Mount Pleasant Community Centre in 2009.

Site conditions during the building's construction, as well as changes to the functional program of the room in which *FLOW* was installed, created a routinely dusty environment for the two sensitive Sanyo projectors. With projector functioning compromised, lamp life was severely shortened despite regular filter cleaning and replacement.

In November 2021, Public Art maintenance staff assessed the artwork components inside a utility closet and the projectors in the Centre's games room. All components in the utility closet were deemed functioning properly. Both projectors were found to need all lamps replaced, a time-consuming project as the projectors age made replacement components difficult to source.

Following installation of replacement lamps, Public Art maintenance staff discovered that both projectors were now displaying a warning signal indicating the ballasts in each projector had stopped functioning. As the projectors were now over 12 years old and Sanyo had been acquired by another company, replacement ballasts were no longer available, effectively rendering the projectors obsolete.

On April 25 2024, all components and related hardware for the *FLOW* artwork were removed from the site. Some components were donated back to the artist, and defunct components sent to recycling. Components that control the switch glass panes remaining on-site as part of the exterior window wall have been retained, and Community Centre staff will arrange to meet with the programmer to repurpose these for future use.

Discussion

Considering the age of the media artwork, persistent technical issues with the site, and a review of replacement costs of new projectors, Public Art staff came to the difficult conclusion that *FLOW* should be considered for deaccessioning.

As called for by the City's policy on Deaccessioning, staff contacted artists Fiona Bowie and Sidney Fels. The pair wrote back, along with their technical lead Morgan Hibberts, responded with understanding and gratitude for the support the piece had been given over the years. "The decision to deaccession the work was realistically expected, given the age of the projectors and the cost of replacing them." The website created as part of the project will transition to displaying the live feed which formerly was projected on the windows of the Centre.

For Action

To formally remove the work from the collection, the City required approval from the Public Art Committee, which staff now seek.