



SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION

Monthly Meeting: Extended Retreat

Tuesday, February 14, 2017 | 2pm-6pm

Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute, West Room

Commissioners present: Juan Alonso-Rodriguez, Cassie Chinn, Dawn Chirwa, Priya Frank, Steve Galatro, Ana Lester, Vivian Phillips (chair), Tracy Rector, S. Surface, and Sharon Williams

Commissioners absent: Jeff Benesi, Terri Hiroshima and Jonathan Cunningham

Staff present: Calandra Childers, Lara Davis, Randy Engstrom, Diana Falchuk, Amber Rose Jimenez, Matthew Richter, Shaun Scott, and Ruri Yampolsky

Guests present: Au Collective members Cheryl Delostrinos and Randy Ford

Call to Order:

Vivian Phillips called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. with an acknowledgement that we are on Indigenous land, the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people.

Approval of the January minutes

Tracy Rector moved to approve the January minutes at 2:35pm. Dawn Chirwa seconded. All present approved.

Artist Presentation

Vivian Phillips introduced Cheryl Delostrinos and Randy Ford, two members of Au Collective, a dance artist group of color, women artists and queer artists who develop relatable and engaging dance art that reflects a multi-faceted family of fourteen dancers. Following the dance performance, they shared their vision to create multi-racial dance art that is accessible to all audiences, and described:

- As a new nonprofit, they are exploring funding, grants, community outreach and space. Their greatest barrier is lacking venue space since it is a huge factor for performance and youth workshops, it is great need for the community to consistently engage with group, and it presents a significant cost-barrier since affordability within the Central Area is rapidly decreasing. It is important to the group to reclaim space and ensure that their students and youth have a voice.

2017 ARTS Work Plan

Randy Engstrom summarized the key priorities that the ARTS team: planning for the new cultural space in King Street Station as an affordable, accessible arts space and resource for the whole community; the expansion of the Creative Advantage partnership with Seattle Schools as the first Creative Advantage Skill Center focused on Media Arts launches; the designation of two new Arts & Cultural Districts; and ensure the Cultural Preservation Fund is aligned to achieve the goals of the overall Equitable Development Initiative. Randy's personal goals centered on Youth Opportunity, Race and Social Justice, Good Governance and Affordability and Livability.



Priya Frank inquired about pay equity as a specific example of how organizations are approaching an issue and the sector-wide opportunity to leverage shared knowledge, resources, or process across the community. As ARTS embarks on racial equity work, how can information about our journey be shared (i.e. in a blog) to offer greater transparency and provide an opportunity for feedback. **Diana Falchuk offered to follow up.**

Cassie Chinn asked about Affordability, HALA and the Livability index, to which Randy responded with our short-term work on the Cultural Preservation Fund and King Street Station, and a larger goal to keep arts & culture as an evergreen strategy toward livability. Dawn inquired about where these discussions are taking place, and where we can intervene; Vivian emphasized that addressing new project proposals are the best windows of opportunities, since in many cases underway already, the next best course of action is to address upstream policies and planning strategies.

Racial Equity Planning

Diana Falchuk presented the work of ARTS as embedded within the Race and Social Justice Initiative, and highlighted that we're the first department in the city with an explicit commitment to racial equity, as well as the first government initiative in the country centered on race and social justice. When we look across all measures, race has the greatest impact upon the quality of life and outcomes for individuals; our work centers on the structural solutions to achieving racial equity in the arts.

On April 4th at LHPAI from 2-6pm, we are hosting a forum with a framework and panel for folks to learn how to lead with racial equity in their organizations. Diana is also coordinating a national workgroup for local government arts agencies doing this work through the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE). She is also redesigning the Racial Equity Toolkit and aiming to incorporate creative strategies. A Creative Equity Pooled fund is underway in partnership with ArtsFund, Boeing and the Seattle Foundation to fund racial equity work.

Diana will follow up with S. Surface directly regarding the upcoming Leading for Equity event curriculum on 4/4, and Amber Rose will work with Diana to identify future opportunities for the commission to meaningfully participate in racial equity work curriculum.

King Street Station: Information and Planning

Matthew Richter shared that as one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S., Seattle is experiencing rapid development and increase displacement, especially for communities of color and lower income communities. When viewing displacement through a racial equity lens, there are clear needs for policy changes and King Street Station is just one of the ways that ARTS is aiming to address displaced culture.

Shaun Scott is authoring a report that will center the voices of people of color in the arts community who have provided feedback on the King Street Station planning process and their hopes for the opportunities to present programming, make or develop their work and hone their craft, and learn



about events in the space. All the focus groups have pointed out that as a building, it can model solutions that institutions and cities to observe our example of revamping an older building to serve the community. Scott will ensure the report is designed and printed in accessible formats and may include audio visual elements.

National Response: NEH/NEA

SAC is the most important arts advocacy agency in Washington State; we face a critical opportunity with CAWA, since WA does not otherwise have funds to match the investment lost from NEA/EH funding. This discussion has accelerated the change moment facing the arts for cultural policy leadership.

Folks asked how we could outreach into rural and suburban communities, especially regarding CAWA and the related education gap crisis facing our state—what is the long-term impact on state funding for the arts? The example of Washington’s Carbon Tax initiative was highlighted as an example of legislation written without the meaningful engagement of communities most directed by the issue, which ultimately lost in the general election. Questions regarding CAWA would be asked during the time with Deputy Executive Sung Yang.

SAC 2017 Work Plan

Each of the four SAC Committees met to develop 2017 workplan priorities: Public Art Advisory Committee, Facilities & Economic Development, Community Development & Outreach, and Youth & Communities. Following break-out work sessions, the groups returned to present on their discussions.

Committees will focus on finalizing workplan priorities over the next month and present their work during the next Commission meeting on March 14th.

CAWA

King County Deputy Executive Sung Yang joined the meeting to address the SAC letter to King County Executive Dow Constantine and the full King County Council in December 2016 regarding recommendations for the Cultural Access Washington initiative legislation impacting four major areas: Community Based Organizations, Regional Organizations, Public School Access Program, and Eligibility—especially highlighting the impact and opportunity for racial equity.

Deputy Yang described the County’s process for finalizing the ordinance and described the interrelated work developing the regional implementation plan.

Regarding the letter, Deputy Yang offered feedback in the following areas:

- Technical Assistance and Fiscal Sponsorship: 4Culture will offer technical assistance to community based organizations and fiscally sponsored groups and will also allocate administrative funds to expand and accommodate the increased support to groups
- Simplicity of Application: the applications will be less cumbersome than the regional organization contracting or application processes



- Public School Program: 4culture will examine proven models to improve school-based partnerships. 12% of funding will go toward transportation, since schools have identified this as a significant financial barrier. Creative Advantage may be an area of focus and great opportunity.
- Individual Artist Funding through 4culture: Jim Kelly said it would be possible to increase the allocation for individual artists, but it is currently unclear whether this issue should be identified within the ordinance or within the implementation plan.
- Acknowledging that POC-led organizations are historically underserved is a political reality for the Council, since the legislation will not receive support unless it addresses racial equity in a meaningful way—it is one of the important transformational goals for this opportunity

Regarding CAWA overall, Deputy Yang shared the following:

- Funding allocation models that weight orgs for their representation of Communities of Color when evaluating applications from CBOs, and support orgs that are working on issues related to racial equity will be developed
- Ideas for the implementation plan are invited from SAC and the community; advocacy will be a critical pathway toward passing the legislation. We need to make the argument that the value of arts orgs reach across the county. The equitable geographic distribution is a challenge for the other King County Councilmembers, since significant funding will enter Seattle-based orgs.
- A standing committee will be established to hold this equity plan accountable to the mission of Access for All, ensuring that funds are going toward equitable outcomes and that adequate technical support is delivered to the organizations throughout the process.
 - The committee will be appointed; folks are invited to share ideas for the viewpoints, sectors, experience, etc. that the Council should seek in building this table
 - Steve Galatro stated that many of our concerns relate to the implementation plan, and asked what the process will look like to design that plan in partnership with 4culture and ensure that racial equity and accountability. Yang stated that the committee is that ongoing accountability vehicle, though there are motions that the Council can pass related to the ordinance.

Questions regarding larger advocacy efforts, especially in matching the narratives about CAWA to the actual legislation, and addressing the opportunities for accountability to racial equity work arose; regardless of the passing of the legislation, the SAC wondered if these organizations would still be committed to racial equity and organizational development toward equity overall, and thanking Deputy Yang, also offered to be at the table to ensure that this work happens.

Adjournment: 6:12 p.m.