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**SEATTLE ARTS COMMISSION**

Minutes

Monthly Meeting

Tuesday, March 11, 2025

Hybrid Meeting

(Zoom & ARTS at King Street Station)

**Commissioners present:** Kayla DeMonte, Holly Jacobson, Yolanda Spencer, Megan Kiskaddon, Avery Barnes, Ricky Graboski, Linda Lowry, Rodney King, Leslie Anderson, Dhyana Garcia, Vanessa Villalobos, Carmen Pan

**Staff in attendance**: Allie Lee, Gülgün Kayim, Kelly Davidson, Ele Watts, Kathy Hsieh, Ashraf Hasham

**Guests**: Jack, Andrea Suarez, Chris Woodward

**Call to Order, Introduction, Land Acknowledgement (4:04)**

* Kayla called the meeting at 4:06pm.
* Land acknowledgement and Indigenous art sharing by Holly.
	+ [Artist Ryan! Feddersen](http://ryanfeddersen.com/)
* Approval of minutes
	+ Holly moved to approve the February minutes. Avery seconded the motion. Approved.
* Public Comment:
	+ Andrea Suarez gave public comment.

**Co-Chairs Report
Briefing: Kayla DeMonte, Holly Jacobson
(Aligning Co-Chairs updates with** [**SAC Goals**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16v5oViKL0yU0ASiEZ87pQHiyMMAuwkeNxZlCtXPUsyw/edit?tab=t.0)**)**

* New SAC member recommendations update (Goal 4)
	+ SAC Executive Team reviewed SAC-recommended candidates (from review and voting process) and put together a slate of names – 2 per vacancy – for appointing authorities to review and select. Allie checked in with candidates to see if they are still interested in being considered and will submit the recommended slate of applicants to appointing authorities. Currently there are 2 Council vacancies and 1 Mayoral vacancy.
* Upcoming SAC presentation of Commission goals and workplan at Council Committee on 3/21 (F) (Goal 1)

**Directors Report
Briefing: Gülgün Kayim**

* ARTS Strategic Planning update – Finished design phase; Ele Watts, Impact & Assessment Manager, helped steward this process.
* Gülgün shared a slide presentation overviewing the Planning Background, Process, Visions & Goals, and Next Steps
* Will share the complete report with SAC

**SAC Questions and Comments:**

* Holly – Thank you for building and focusing on developing a sense of resilience for the office/staff.
	+ Gülgün – We see ourselves as microcosm of community, community needs healing, and can embed this ethic.
* Linda – What are the action items for improving communications with SAC?
	+ Gülgün – Behind each objective there is a workplan. Improving communications lives under leadership/policy team with Allie supporting. We recognize that we are continuously changing, and need to adjust workplans based on conditions.
* Dhyana – This is exciting, there is community and healing involved and I would like to know how SAC can contribute more.
	+ Gülgün – There is opportunity to discuss how SAC can partner with ARTS to work on this strategic plan.
	+ Ele – Getting input from staff was an iterative process of gathering feedback at every step of the way, and building trust and relationships was a big part of this planning process.
* Linda – Can we find the workplan on the website and are you open to feedback and suggestions from Arts Commissioners?
	+ Gülgün – Not yet. The document is not public yet. There are areas we can collaborate on. Ele can share with SAC at the end of the week/soon. We would like you to see the direction but also understand that changes can happen and we may have to adjust as we go.
	+ Holly – When it is shared via Allie/Ele – will that only be for SAC and not with community?
		- Gülgün - Yes, because we haven’t announced it publicly.
* Vanessa – What stood out is value of centering racial equity. Food for thought – would be great to see how community can see themselves in plans with language that connects to our/their common language. i.e. How would someone under immigration threats know ARTS is a protected space. Liked the healing section mentioned. It’s challenging for community now, and this is not talking about what people are experiencing currently. Sometimes doing art feels like a privilege during these times. If there is a way to send a signal to say what are the safe ways people can engage that’d be great.
	+ Gülgün – This particular document is a business plan for the department. An internal plan to get the organization into shape. This document is not a community-centered repot – that will be the cultural plan that we will be working on next, which we will work on with SAC.
	+ Kathy – Our staff is dedicated to community, we do that through our programs, grants, etc. – we are trusted partners with vulnerable communities. We make sure to keep people anonymous and safe to engage with us, and we bring their voices in on a day to day basis.

**Committee Deep Dive – Cultural Investments Committee (CIC) / Impact & Assessment
Briefing: Holly Jacobson, Ele Watts**

* Ele provided an overview of data from all PEG team programs, 2024
	+ Elected officials usually ask about data from the calendar year but our programs don’t always correspond to calendar year (multi-year cycles, application/programming different years, etc.)
	+ Ele provided a quick run through of programs and demographic data collected

**SAC Questions and Comments:**

* Holly to all - What is something from this data that you learned, or you’d like for SAC to value as a data point?
	+ Vanessa – Didn’t know smART Ventures grant accepts 100%. Also BIPOC is represented 50+%, which is very equitable, and aligns with SAC values.
	+ Kayla – Want to acknowledge that office gives out close to 5M in PEG team grants - great to communicate off hand
		- Ele/Gülgün - Column D, cycle over cycle % increase in applications – want to acknowledge that there are orgs looking for funding and coming to our office for support. Heard this is point of interest for advocacy - increased interest across the board, but same amount of money. Yes, we award close to 5M (including other council designated), and based on strict definition of BIPOC, it’s nearly 66% BIPOC which is huge – we are exhibiting our values in action.
* Holly – Noting this doesn’t include public art commissions.
* Ele – Would like to help make data accessible, what do you see? My job is to help tell the story.
	+ Yolanda – Appreciate the work here, laying out the foundation of what you are looking for, helpful for someone not on CIC to look at this information
	+ Megan – Wonderful to see this data presented clearly; interested in knowing how many awardees are first time, and desire for organizing by zip code – CIC wants to do this as mission is helping get the word out to those who don’t know about these opportunities. Is there a way to tease those out? (zip – where the org or artist is based)
	+ Linda/Vanessa – Testimonials of what awardees are doing would be a great advocacy tool to use for advocating for funding.
		- Ele – We do collect information about the programming. We have anecdotes, videos, etc. Our Communications team collects this information to share out and we are figuring out a good way to align quantitative and qualitative data.
* Holly – BIPOC is not a monolith. When we look at communities that are vulnerable, need to have them broken down in demographics more. In CIC we have the ability to deep dive and have ability to further ask.

**Announcements
All**

* Linda – Hosting event for Black History Month on 2/20 at the WOW Gallery at Pacific Place Seattle; Working on Indian Film Festival at MoPOP – will email information to SAC.
* Rodney – Artist reception at Arts West on 3/13 (Th).
* Kathy - For theatres, this might be of interest - Join TCG for a webinar especially focused on advocacy, to discuss the recent executive orders, administration updates, and what they mean for the theatre ecology. On February 19, 2025, TCG invites all theatre workers to attend our virtual gathering, Arts Advocacy 2025: What’s Next & What Now? From 12-2pm ET/9-11am PT, we’ll gather online to process the recent executive orders and what they mean for our theatre ecology. We know that many of you are reeling from policy changes that threaten the safety of your families and communities, even as other orders threaten the health of our organizations. This virtual gathering is an opportunity to build our solidarity and collective power to respond. (Sorry for the long link) <https://tcg.org/Web/Events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=OMBWEBPT2&WebsiteKey=d4c31fa4-467a-4959-b48b-cae3ea93e516&fbclid=IwY2xjawIYz7FleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHem29HzHqhGf1bEAjvUVj30LxWDGRa8epYYp0bHSCRwGTxe3rnmXmWRGgQ_aem_2CrAAkc1k-1gLAt_wjMNLA>
* Megan - Let me know if you want to come see Dynasty Handbag’s Titanic Depression - satirical take on James Cameron’s Titanic if it hit a trash pile instead of an iceberg - come laugh about late-stage capitalism <https://ontheboards.org/events/24-25/dynasty-handbag> March 27-29 at On the Boards
* Yoon - <https://shunpike.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=ebd19c58512f7214e81cf249a&id=26efb7c462&e=3653ba3228>

Meeting adjourned at 5:00pm.