Public Art Policy
at Carnegie Mellon
Carnegie Mellon University Advancement
Carnegie Mellon University Alumni Relations
Carnegie Mellon University Libraries
Carnegie Mellon University Student Senate
Center for the Arts in Society at Carnegie Mellon University
Coro Center for Civic Leadership, Pittsburgh
Phi Beta Kappa—Carnegie Mellon University Chapter,
with a grant from the Teagle Foundation

Campus Conversation for Public Art Committee

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A Deliberative Poll® on Public Art Policy at Carnegie Mellon

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In her essay in *Public Art by the Book*, a definitive resource for information on public art, Shelly Willis (2005) notes that “most university public art programs use the same funding mechanism, selection processes, policies, and master plans as those used by the other types of public art organizations, and they all face the same challenges of conservation and maintenance.” However, according to Willis, campus art must take on challenges that public art need not consider, including a heightened awareness of process and campus response.

Until recently, the only formal procedures for the consideration of public art at Carnegie Mellon were practical ones. One such procedure outlines how to request space in the School of Art for a temporary outdoor display. However, there was no policy for the permanent (or long-term) installation of art in public places on campus.

In response to recent discussions about several new pieces of public art, the Faculty Senate first began consideration of a new Carnegie Mellon University Public Art Policy in October 2005. A Public Art Committee (PAC) was formed and a Campus Public Art Policy was formulated and approved by the Faculty Senate, with final approval by the President’s Council in February 2006.

In May 2006, “Campus Conversations,” an initiative in deliberative democracy hosted by the University Libraries, was engaged by Carnegie Mellon’s newly formed Public Art Committee to conduct a Deliberative Poll® about the recent debate arising from public art on the campus and to ascertain current campus attitudes toward public art in general.

One objective of this deliberative poll is to elicit responses from a wide variety of stakeholders at the university about the development of the public spaces of the campus and the university’s desire to create a collection and an environment that recognizes excellence in the arts and other creative endeavors related to the university. There are many aspects to this issue that should be explored by the entire campus community in order to guide two newly formed committees, Public Art and Campus Design Review, in developing effective policies and procedures, making decisions about the location of public works, planning the public spaces for the campus, and addressing the university’s shared mission.

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**Carnegie Mellon’s Mission**

To create and disseminate knowledge and art through research and artistic expression, teaching and learning; and to transfer intellectual products to society.

To serve our students by teaching them problem-solving, leadership and teamwork skills, and the value of a commitment to quality, ethical behavior, society and respect for one another.

To pursue the advantages provided by a diverse and relatively small university community, open to the exchange of ideas, where discovery, creativity, and personal and professional development can flourish.
**Deliberative Polling**

In a deliberative poll, people gather to discuss and develop informed opinions about issues that impact their lives, and then share those opinions with policy-makers who can take action based upon them. Deliberative Polling is a democratic decision-making process capable of articulating the informed voice of the people and potentially raising that voice to a level where it will be heard by those who make public policy. The process was developed and trademarked by Professor James Fishkin, now at Stanford University’s Center for Deliberative Democracy.

Deliberative polling has three main ingredients:
- Balanced information about the issues;
- Discussion in small groups; and
- The opportunity for participants to pose questions to a panel of experts.

You can see the process in the flowchart below.

**Campus Conversations**

Campus Conversations, using the deliberative polling protocol, asks members of Carnegie Mellon’s campus community to become informed about and discuss campus-related issues, and then share their informed opinions with campus policy-makers.

These are the goals of Campus Conversations:
- Highlight the virtues of campus diversity, as this is embedded in the nature of deliberation;
- Provide a new tool for dissemination and feedback; and
- Create a sense of campus community and an appreciation of democratic practice and civic engagement.

**Ground Rules for Participating in a Deliberative Poll®**

- Explain your own perspective
- Listen to other people’s views without interruption
- Focus on reasoned arguments, challenging experiences and relevant facts
- Treat each other with respect at all times
“...For any [public art] project that would result in substantial visual impact on a significant part of the campus, there should be opportunity for extensive public discussion of the proposal....”

Hugh Young, emeritus professor of physics

“For a school so rich in art and art history, why aren’t we arguing over how few pieces of art there are?”

Richard Fieler (E 1956)

“You can’t be serious about that sculpture [Walking to the Sky]. Please tell me this is an April fool’s joke! At LEAST tell me this thing is only temporary. I for one do not want to make a joke of what precious little campus we have!”

Eric Riebling (ECE 1985) | Comment on www.thetartan.org on Feb 16, 2006

“These sculptures [Man Walking to the Sky; Woman Walking to the Sky] are even better in person....They are not only inspiring, but about the least controversial works of art ever. The artist is Jonathan Borofsky, who is renowned for these works....”

Andrea Hamilton (BHA 2007), Student Body Vice President | blog at 2006-02-14 15:26

“On a university campus, is it almost an obligation for a public art work, on some level, to be controversial? ...It’s a very important question to consider.”

Doug Cooper (Arch 1970)

“Unlike many other disciplines...we have had limited opportunity thus far to showcase the accomplishments of our prominent alumni from the School of Art on our own campus. We welcome [this] opportunity....”

Ralph R. Horgan, vice provost for campus design and facility development, and Robbee Baker Kosak, vice president for university advancement

“Walking to the Sky...is not very popular among the CMU students because most people seem to think it’s ugly (I think it’s weird enough that [it] being ugly is acceptable)...It’s so bizarre that I actually think its presence will be fun. Everybody who comes to campus will say, what the hell is that? and I’ll have a story to tell.”

Jonathan McCune, doctoral candidate, electrical and computer engineering

“...I thank my lucky stars that decisions regarding space and art on our campus are not made only on the basis of architectural lines and symmetries. ...Our university is alive and vibrant. I hope we won’t be hampered in celebrating and renewing its life by calls to make it nothing more than a historic archive.”

Jim Hoburg, professor of electrical and computer engineering

“Public art does not accomplish its oft-stated mission of providing a social or moral good. Instead, it offends the public’s aesthetic sensibilities, presenting a kind of visual insult or humiliation.”

Clark Glymour; professor of philosophy and Douglas Stalker, University of Delaware in Public Interest, No. 66 (Winter 1982)

“Works of art are essentially propositions about reality, and therein lies their power to seduce, please, provoke or repel....The degree to which [they mesh] with our own understanding or expectations of the world often determines the intensity of our rejection or acceptance, sometimes leaving us altogether indifferent.”

Susanne Slavick, former head of the School of Art
The conversation about public art on Carnegie Mellon’s campus developed as a result of the installation of the large-scale sculpture *Walking to the Sky* by Jonathan Borofsky, a Carnegie Mellon alumnus (Art 1964) and an internationally prominent artist. As awareness of the pending installation increased, concerns were raised about the site of the sculpture, the sculpture itself, and the lack of a formal process for considering and accepting such gifts to the university. What resulted was a full-blown debate about public art on campus.

A CFA alumna and current university trustee gave the funds that made it possible to purchase and install *Walking to the Sky*. As described on the College of Fine Arts website, this donor is “deeply dedicated to advancing the role of contemporary art in the life and environment of the university, [inspiring a] vision to create a public art collection on campus that will both physically enhance the university and reflect the preeminence of the School of Art and its world renowned alumni artists.” (www.cmu.edu/cfa/people) Another example of public art that was made possible by a donation from this alumna is the *Kraus Campo* between the College of Fine Arts and the Tepper School of Business, a unique collaboration combining art and landscape design. The artist, Mel Bochner, is also an alumnus of Carnegie Mellon (Art 1962) and internationally renowned for his work.

Borofsky has had more than 35 large-scale sculptures installed in major cities around the world, including Tokyo, Berlin, Munich, Seoul, New York, Baltimore, Denver, Minneapolis, Los Angeles and Seattle. On the occasion of the installation at Carnegie Mellon, he said: 

*Walking to the Sky* is a portrait of all of humanity rising upward from the earth to the heavens above—striving into the future with strength and determination. Ultimately, this sculpture is a symbol for our collective search for wisdom and awakened consciousness….It reflects Carnegie Mellon’s 21st century effort to bring new forms of art and architecture to campus.

(in a press release by Carnegie Mellon Media Relations)
Since the sculpture has been prominently and specifically placed on Carnegie Mellon’s campus, it would be natural to see it as a symbol for the exploration that all students are involved with.

(in an interview with Eric Sloss)

For many, the site preparation in September 2005 at the intersection of the Cut and the Hornbostel Mall, “announced” the expected arrival of the Borofsky sculpture. Several parties, not yet familiar with the piece, voiced concern that a large sculpture at the proposed location might block the view across the expanse of lawn between Hamerschlag Hall and the College of Fine Arts, which itself was part of an early campus design by architect and first Dean of the College of Fine Arts, Henry Hornbostel.

Campus publications such as FOCUS, a publication of the faculty and staff of Carnegie Mellon and The Tartan, Carnegie Mellon’s student newspaper, were used as a forum for the discussion about Walking to the Sky and public art in general.

In an essay submitted to FOCUS (October 2005), Carnegie Mellon architecture librarian archivist Martin Aurand was one of the first to publicly comment, writing about his desire to preserve the original vision for the Mall.

Hornbostel’s Beaux Arts design principals, as derived from French Baroque planning, addressed space as a positive element, rather than just a void. The 100-foot-tall ‘Walking to the Sky’ will challenge the century-old primacy of the Hamerschlag Hall tower, the scale of the entire campus ... the clarity of Hornbostel’s vista, and the integrity of his ‘grand design.’

In a statement to the Faculty Senate and in FOCUS (February 2006), Hugh Young, emeritus professor of physics, posed many pointed questions:

What are the larger issues for public art on our campus? What are the rights of

Students writing for The Tartan, weighed in on the subject as well in an editorial article on October 31, 2005:

The vaguely phallic Man Walking to the Sky [sic] has apparently struck a nerve; students who have seen pictures of what the sculpture looks like have said exactly what we did: wow, that’s god-awful….One of the most important considerations is the lack of consistency amongst the architectural and artistic styles on campus. …this latest trend toward bizarre, tacky art installations is a turn for the worse. A trustee has donated Borofsky’s work, and the administration has decided that a pole with a man walking atop is fitting with our campus decor.

We’ve got to stop this before it becomes a habit.

Now, please don’t be misled to believe that there isn’t support for art on campus. There’s plenty of room for thought-provoking installations that have the backing of both the administration and the student community.
the members of the campus community who will experience the art? Will the experience be voluntary, or will it be coerced?…Is the scale of the object appropriate? Is there a possible alternative location?

In the March 2006 FOCUS, former Head of the School of Art, Susanne Slavick, wrote:

Art provokes and asks a lot of questions. That is precisely why it is so important, especially in a culture of learning….Making the arts visible is about showing us who, why, where and how we are as a human beings in a place where such questions should be routinely examined.

University President Jared Cohon expressed his support of art on campus in the March 2006 FOCUS:

Carnegie Mellon is world renowned for our strengths in the arts, and artists and performers make a very valuable contribution to our collective life. It is appropriate that our campus environment should reflect the practice and presentation of the arts at the highest levels….Having such work is very important at any university where the arts play as powerful a role in our shared intellectual life as they do here….Works of art in public spaces showcase our historic and current strength in the arts and demonstrate our commitment to supporting serious work by faculty, students, and alumni.

In addition, many questions and concerns were raised at Faculty Senate and Student Senate meetings, such as who decided to accept the gift; who benefits from the gift; how was the site selected; and what additional costs are involved, such as insurance and maintenance?

The Public Art Committee (PAC) is charged with making decisions about public art at Carnegie Mellon and uses a number of guidelines, plans, and procedures to make those decisions. One of your tasks as a participant in this deliberative poll is to consider the role of public art at Carnegie Mellon and the effectiveness of the Public Art Policy in representing the campus community. In this section, we review the Campus Master Plan, the Public Art Policy, and the rationale for collecting art at Carnegie Mellon. We also provide some images of art at Carnegie Mellon, as well as some examples of how other universities feature their public art programs.

The Campus Master Plan

The Carnegie Mellon Campus Plan guides all committees and decisions that are concerned with campus art and design. A master planning process engaged the campus community in crafting a plan for the future of Carnegie Mellon’s campus, and on May 20, 2002, the Pittsburgh City Council approved the Carnegie Mellon Campus Plan. (www.cmu.edu/planning/Carnegie_Mellon_Campus_Plan.pdf)

One of the stated “Campus Planning Principles” specifically addresses the issue of public art (p. 46):

11. The campus environment shall be enhanced by quality public art.

Public spaces in buildings, quadrangles, and smaller garden spaces provide opportunities for appropriately scaled art.

Public art shall represent the creative energies of the campus community with the potential to make connections between the past and the future.

The plan also identifies a lack of “secondary, intimate, casual linkages between areas of campus” that might be improved by adding smaller quadrangles to the existing large quadrangles, possibly with gardens, landscape, or sculpture,
linked by pedestrian pathways. Although the master plan provides a road map for development of the campus, it leaves many definitions open to interpretation, allowing both the PAC and the campus community to consider the direction the public spaces might take.

**What is Public Art?**

Art has always been a significant aspect of life at Carnegie Mellon University. The School of Fine and Applied Arts, which eventually became the College of Fine Arts (CFA), was one of the original four schools within Carnegie Technical Schools. Founded in 1905, it was the first comprehensive arts learning institution in the United States. CFA has educated outstanding artists, architects, designers, theater artists and musicians who have made important contributions to culture in the United States and the world for almost a century. In addition to the ongoing development of CFA, Carnegie Mellon has also been collecting art since its inception as Carnegie Technical Institute in 1900.

In their article “Public Art Funding,” Brown and Rubin (2000) provide this definition of public art, (supplied by an anonymous individual):

> Public art is a mirror that reflects the local environment, cultural values, and artistic vitality of the community in which it exists. At its best, public art is more than just art installed in public places. It is a community-based process of dialogue, involvement, and participation. Public art enhances the quality of life for citizens by encouraging a heightened sense of place, enhancing a community’s prestige, and enlivening the visual quality of the built environment.

Although the university established a policy for its arts collection in 1995 under the Artistic Properties Committee in the University Libraries (see [www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/ArtProp.html](http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/ArtProp.html)), the new Public Art Policy was developed specifically to address,

among other things, the permanent or long-term placement of art in public spaces on campus, including all outdoor campus space and interior public spaces such as lobbies and social spaces. Art is considered permanent if it is installed with no anticipated time limit. Long-term is defined as a display on view for six months or more.

**Examples of public art at Carnegie Mellon**

- Mel Bochner: *Kraus Campo*, 2005

**Public art collections at other universities**

- [University of Michigan](http://www.umich.edu)
- [Arizona State University](http://www.asu.edu)
Reasons for Donating and Collecting Art

Works of art are donated and collected for many reasons. A work of art can be a philanthropic donation to the university from an individual or an estate, such as the artwork that the Tepper School received for the Posner Center. Some donors believe that the quality of life at the university is enhanced by the rich experience that public art provides; other donors appreciate the tax incentives a donation can bring. Artists may donate a piece in order to broaden their reputation, or to have the piece in a public setting.

In terms of collecting art, there are also different motivations and goals. Collecting can be seen as a financial investment, with the hope that the value of the collection will increase. Art might also be collected for educational purposes, such as the collection of botanical drawings and prints in the Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation at Carnegie Mellon, which specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science. An art collection can also help enhance the reputation or environment of a collector; many corporations collect art for their headquarters for the enjoyment of their employees, and as a strategy to appeal to a targeted customer base. A university might collect art “to explore challenging, intellectually inquisitive, contemporary art-making in all media. The purpose is to not only enjoy art’s traditional focus on aesthetics, but to explore art that examines the cultural, social, and sometimes, scientific or economic, contexts that surround us; to expose, rethink, and represent aspects of our world,” which is the mission of the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) List Visual Arts Center.

Through this Campus Conversation the Public Art Committee hopes to gather information that will help it make decisions about accepting donations, as well as about the general collection practices of Carnegie Mellon.

Maintaining Public Art

As the saying goes, “there is no such thing as a free kitten.” The costs to the university of a “donation” include site preparation and installation, recognition, maintenance, insurance, and storage. One example of a public art piece that had hidden costs is Translocation (Jill Watson Tribute) by Magdalena Jetelová, created for the Wats:On Festival in 1999 to commemorate the interdisciplinary interests of Jill Watson, adjunct professor of architecture and MFA candidate, who died on TWA Flight 800 in 1996. The piece was designed to create two underground spaces that cross the mediums of sculpture and architecture, and could be seen in daylight, with one space seeming to disappear at night. The installation is an example of one that was not meant to be permanent. However, according to the artist, it was constructed so that it could remain if the situation changed. Unfortunately, it remains a mystery to nearly everyone on campus. The lighting, designed to make a dramatic impact at night, is no longer functional, and it is estimated it would cost $40,000 for repairs. The piece is delineated on the ground only by a metal frame under a large cover.

Photo: Robert Long on the cover of Sculpture magazine
Magdalena Jetelová with Arthur Lubetz
Translocation, 1999
Mixed media, site-specific work on the campus of Carnegie Mellon University
The Jetelová piece is currently under cover.

Criteria for Choosing Public Art

While the selection of specific works might at times be controversial, the process of selection will always consider the issues of artistic quality, appropriateness, site context, public sensibility, durability, maintenance, safety, and cost. These issues can be more specifically defined in a comprehensive collections plan that builds on the campus master plan. Any institution with a collection should have a collections plan that outlines the goals of the collection, provides a description or catalogue of the collection, and includes management, maintenance and conservation policies, and a Code of Ethics. A collection policy has not yet been developed at Carnegie Mellon, and the Public Art Committee’s advocacy role as a curator, or overseer, of the university’s art collection has not been defined, but consideration of these issues is essential in developing a comprehensive collection.

Accessioning (Acquiring) Art

Acquisitions are currently made at Carnegie Mellon with the implicit intention of building the university’s collection and preserving it for future generations. Objects accessioned into the collection are permanently retained provided they continue to support the mission of the university. However, the university may choose to deaccession, or remove from the collection, any object that it legally owns that, upon examination, is deemed to be inappropriate for further retention.

John Carson, the new Head of the School of Art, and others have proposed the following questions for the Public Art Committee to use when considering a work for the university’s collection:

**Aesthetic:** What is the essential nature of the work? How has site been taken into account? Is the scale appropriate? Is it conservative or innovative? How does it relate to the existing portfolio of work on campus?

**Symbolic:** Does it have symbolic value? (Generally or specifically in relation to Carnegie Mellon)? What is the work’s apparent intention? Is it reactionary or radical? (Reassuring or challenging)? What is its strongest signal or message? To whom does it speak most strongly? To what degree does the work ask for an audience? What is its likely breadth of appeal? What is the donor or artist’s connection to Carnegie Mellon?

**Practical:** Are there any significant structural issues? Are there any significant practical issues (including health and safety)? What are the short term and long term maintenance issues? Are there any proximity issues? Is the donation conditional? What are the publicity issues? Value / costs / insurance?

Once an object has been accessioned, either as a ‘Public Art Work’ or into the Artistic Properties Collection, it can only be removed through completion of the deaccession process, outlined by the respective policies and committees. The act of deaccessioning presupposes that the object has been formally accessioned into the university’s collection. The same degree of careful examination goes into making decisions regarding the deaccessioning of objects as is given to the evaluation of potential acquisitions (see http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Public_Art_Policy.htm).
Policies and procedures have existed which outline how to request space for temporary displays of artwork on campus. For example, through the Department of Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S), a student may use a “Student Project Display Application.” Other policies exist for temporary exhibitions in spaces in Doherty Hall, the Ellis Gallery and the interior public areas in the College of Fine Arts Building, which also must be approved through EH&S, as well as Facilities Management Services (FMS). In addition, current objects in the collections are catalogued and maintained under the auspices of the Artistic Properties Committee. However, there has been no policy for the permanent (or long-term) installation of art in public places on campus.

In response to the recent debate, the new Public Art Policy was developed. (http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/Public_Art_Policy.htm)

A Carnegie Mellon University policy may include governing principles, it may mandate or constrain action, it may ensure compliance with laws, or it may mitigate the university’s risk. It must be approved by the President’s Council, a senior-level decision-making body of Carnegie Mellon, and ultimately by the president, before it becomes official policy. This new Public Art Policy defined the members and procedures for a Public Art Committee (PAC), and the review, acquisition, acceptance, siting, and deaccessioning (removal) of permanent and long term campus art. This policy was developed under the assumption that “art enhances the quality of life for all people and should be a part of the daily life of the students, faculty, and staff at Carnegie Mellon.”

With this belief in mind, and with the aim of making the selection process more transparent to the campus community, the Public Art Committee (PAC) was established. The committee was established to:

**Deaccessioning (Removing) Art**

According to the new Public Art Policy, the PAC may consider the deaccessioning of artwork for one or more of the following reasons in the event that it cannot be re-sited:

1. A work is not, or is only rarely, on display because of lack of a suitable site.
2. The condition or security of the artwork cannot be reasonably guaranteed.
3. The artwork has been damaged or has deteriorated, and repair is impractical or unfeasible.
4. The artwork endangers public safety.
5. In the case of site-specific artwork, the artwork’s relationship to the site is altered because of changes to the site.
6. The artwork has been determined to be incompatible with the collection.
7. The university, with the concurrence of the PAC, wishes to replace the artwork with work of more significance by the same artist.
8. The artwork requires excessive maintenance, has faults of design or workmanship.

A recent, controversial example of deaccessioning public art works took place at the University of Texas at Austin (UT). The university announced it was studying the issue of possible removal of several Confederate statues on campus, including those of Confederate General Robert E. Lee and President Jefferson Davis. Former UT President Larry Faulkner openly criticized the statues, but his successor, William Powers Jr., plans to convene a panel to discuss what to do about them. “Some people feel they’re part of the history of the institution. And some people feel they shouldn’t be there,” UT spokesman Don Hale said. “He [President Powers] is not going to make an arbitrary decision about it.” (Root, 2007)
1. Review specific proposals for public art with the purpose of recommending to the president approval, suggestions for modification, or rejection of the public art, and its siting.

2. Clarify the need for public art on the Carnegie Mellon campus and target specific siting opportunities, including both indoor and outdoor public spaces, to build on the campus master planning process.

The makeup of the selection committee, which includes art experts, as well as those whose connection to the campus community reflects broader public sensibilities, was carefully considered. These groups play different roles with equally important outcomes. It can be argued that the primary users of particular spaces on campus have a greater interest in campus art. For that reason, the new policy also states that: “[r]epresentatives of the primary user(s) of the space where the public art is to be sited must also be consulted.”

According to the approved policy the committee has representation from the College of Fine Arts, Miller Gallery, and School of Art; plus there are three non-specialist faculty members who are appointed for staggered terms by the deans of the Mellon College of Science, Tepper School of Business, Carnegie Institute of Technology, School of Computer Science, College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Heinz School of Public Policy; two trustees; a staff member; four students (two each of graduate and undergraduate); individuals from the Artistic Properties and Design Review Committees; and one individual from the Pittsburgh community (invited by the provost).

To further ensure “that the PAC has the opportunity to receive input from all campus constituencies, prior to recommending acceptance of a piece of public art, the PAC shall hold at least one public meeting which all interested [constituencies] may attend for purposes of hearing about and offering comment on the proposed piece” (Public Art Policy 2006), which will be publicized through Faculty Senate and the other representative groups, and in printed and online versions of the 8½ x 11 News.

A typical Public Art Committee decision will most likely not cause the debate that a large-scale piece like Walking to the Sky caused. In December 2006, the committee considered three works of art: the Self-Made Man in the Tepper School; a bust of Nikola Tesla in Newell-Simon Hall; and prints by Burton Morris (Art 1986) being considered for the University Center. The campus community was invited to a Town Hall Meeting, publicized in the 8½ x 11 News, to discuss these works. There were only one or two non-committee members in attendance.
it will have funds in place for maintaining art of significant scale and size that might be donated in the future. It should be noted that the policy does not currently address artwork that is purchased by the university rather than given by a donor; although one might assume purchased work would fall under this policy.

The Public Art Committee must be sensitive to the policies still waiting to emerge from situations and issues not anticipated in the current policy. By combining existing policy with emerging needs, the PAC can continue to build a process for the approval of art on campus that is more transparent, although how these issues will be applied in practice continues to develop.

As advisors to the President and the President’s Council, the Public Art Committee’s recommendations are not binding, but they are strongly influential—and they are public. For that reason, the Public Art Committee has the potential to improve decision-making among faculty, staff, students, and the administration.

Public Art Decision-Making

The university’s vision states, “Carnegie Mellon aspires to be a leader among educational institutions by building on its traditions of innovation, problem solving and interdisciplinary collaboration to meet the changing needs of society.” It further states, “Public art shall represent the creative energies of the campus community with the potential to make connections between the past and the future,” and “The [Campus Planning] principles shall ensure a campus environment for living, learning, and creative inquiry.”

Questions then emerge that campus communities must struggle with. What authority do we give the experts, so that, as a public, we can grow out of existing assumptions and into richer associations? How might the experts best collaborate with us? And how does the rich tradition of artistic innovation fit into the tradition of innovation within the campus community?

Topics for Discussion

1. After reviewing the current campus policy on public art, do you think it is a good policy or one that needs improvement? What are some of its best features, and what are some of your concerns?

2. What roles do/should experts, representative committee members, and the campus community play in determining whether to acquire or deaccess (remove) public art? What role should the committee play in regard to public art on campus: an advocate for public art or a gatekeeper or both?

3. Should the campus actively pursue the acquisition of public art? Should the campus rely on donations? What do you think about setting aside money for the acquisition and maintenance of public art on campus?

4. How should one consider the placement of public art on campus? How should we think about the number of pieces of public art on campus?

5. Explore the roles that aesthetic taste, the decision process, and site location might play in your understanding of public art policy.

6. The debate over public art has and is an ongoing discussion across the country. What might be special about this discussion at Carnegie Mellon and how, if at all, might this conversation be useful to other campuses? How might the experience of other campuses with public art be helpful to us?

For those wishing to do so, this Campus Conversation can continue online through Monday, April 16th. A special version of PICOLA (Public Informed Citizens On-line Assembly) has been established at http://caae.phil.cmu.edu/picola/public_art/. Go to this site to access more materials on this topic, participate in an online Forum, and, if you wish, to fill-out an additional survey.


Tartan Board (Forum). “Ugly and cumbersome, sure; but is it art?” The Tartan, Volume 100, Issue 9, October 31, 2005.