

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage and Libraries	26 May 2015
Subject: City Arts Initiative: recommendations to the Culture, Heritage and Libraries Committee	Public
Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries	For Decision
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report presents the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative which met on 29 April 2015. The group considered the following proposals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Cancer Research DNA Double Helix Summer Installations b. Nuit Blanche (a festival of light) c. John Smith statue photo (Pimm's drink campaign) <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>It is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cancer Research installations be approved, subject to suitable locations being agreed • Nuit Blanche be approved subject to clarification of requirements and on the proviso that due to existing commitments in 2016 (Shakespeare 400, Battle of the Somme and Great Fire anniversaries), the City Corporation would only be able to offer limited practical assistance • The John Smith statue photo application be rejected 	

Main Report

Background

1. The City Arts Initiative was established to improve the management of public art in the City. It provides advice to your Committee and other service Committees as appropriate on proposals for new public art, the maintenance of the City's existing public art and, if necessary, decommissioning.
2. Your Committee appointed your Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Barbara Newman to sit on the City Arts Initiative Group in the 2015/16 Committee year.

Current Position

3. The City Arts Initiative met on 29 April 2015 to consider three applications: a Cancer Research installation, an all-night contemporary art festival (Nuit Blanche) and a proposal to photograph the John Smith statue in loose summer clothing for a non-branded, “what Brits love best about summer” news story campaign for Pimm’s.
4. Full details of the applications are available on request from the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.

Proposals

Cancer Research DNA Double Helix Summer Installations

5. Cancer Research has commissioned 20 to 25 double helix sculptures to be customised by artists, designers and celebrities to the brief of ‘What’s in your DNA?’ These sculptures they hope to display at London locations for 10 weeks over the summer, from the end of June to the beginning of September 2015.
6. After the event, the statues will be sold at auction to raise money for the Francis Crick Institute (a new medical research laboratory, of which Cancer Research is one of the six founding partners).
7. Each sculpture will stand at 2435mm tall (including a base of 400mm). They have been developed with a structural biologist to ensure scientific integrity, while also acting as an artistic interpretation of a DNA double helix.
8. It was agreed that this was for a good cause and that the designs of the helix sculptures were appropriate enough to allow them to be located on the City’s streets.
9. The City Arts Initiative recommended this for approval subject to the locations being agreed.

Nuit Blanche

10. Nuit Blanche is an all-night contemporary arts festival that began in 2002 in Paris and has since been exported to more than 30 cities around the world. Each year, a team of curators from leading cultural institutions puts together a multidisciplinary programme, transforming both iconic and hidden parts of the chosen city.
11. For its first London edition, the festival will take place in the area known as “The Northbank” (working with the Northbank BID) and in the City of London. The trail, curated by the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), will take visitors from Charing Cross to Temple and will continue on to Fleet Street and St Paul’s Cathedral.
12. The City Arts Initiative agreed that the project sounded exciting and would increase visitors to the City. However, there were reservations about the ability of the applicant to raise the requisite funding and over the involvement that they required from the City’s teams in highways, marketing and other areas.

13. It was agreed that the applicant would be told that the City of London Corporation would only be able to offer limited marketing assistance due to existing commitments and other major projects taking place in 2016 (these include Shakespeare 400, the Battle of the Somme (100) and the Great Fire 350).
14. The City Arts Initiative therefore recommended this for approval subject to clarification of requirements and on the proviso that due to existing commitments in 2016, the City Corporation would only be able to offer limited practical assistance. It was also agreed that a letter of support could be given to Nuit Blanche as requested to show the City's good will for the project, subject to your Committee's ratification of the recommendation.

John Smith statue photo

15. It was proposed that the statue of John Smith located just off Cheapside in Bow Churchyard would be dressed in loose unbranded summer clothing for a photo shoot, along with several other statues around the country, as part of a news story about celebrating the British summer.
16. A question over how the artwork may be considered one of the most contentious in the City's portfolio was raised (the subject of the statue and his role in expanding British rule and influence being cited) and it was thought use of the statue was therefore inappropriate.
17. Given the focus of the photo campaign (what Brits love best about summer) and its links with the connotations cited above, the link to the Pimm's drink brand and the lack of artistic merit, the proposal was recommended to be rejected by your Committee.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

18. The City Arts Initiative was formed to support the City's management of public art which supports the "vibrant and culturally rich" strand of the City Together Strategy and the delivery of the City's Cultural and Visitor Strategies.

Conclusion

19. This report summarises the discussions of the City Arts Initiative and presents recommendations in relation to the public art applications considered on 29 April 2015.

Background Papers:

Full details of the applications are available on request from the Director of Culture, Heritage and Libraries.

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