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| Committee(s): | Date(s): |
| Culture, Heritage & Libraries | 23 September 2015 |
| Subject: City Arts Initiative: recommendations to the Culture, Heritage & Libraries Committee | Public |
| Report of: Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries | For Decision |

Summary

This report presents the recommendations of the City Arts Initiative which met on 27 August 2015. The group considered the following proposals:

- a) Southbank Mosaics CIC – Shakespeare 400
- b) Sokari Douglas Camp – All the World is now Richer
- c) Royal Mail Group – 500th Anniversary: Special Postmark Post Box
- d) Christ’s Hospital School – Artwork: Public Commission
- e) The Rothschild Foundation / GLA – Thames: The Illuminated River

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

- Southbank Mosaics CIC be approved subject to further clarifications
- Sokari Douglas Camp be rejected due to another similarly themed public art installation and unsuitable location
- Royal Mail be approved subject to a suitable alternative location being identified
- Christ’s Hospital School be approved following the unanimous selection of a preferred artist to be recommended to the applicant
- The Rothschild Foundation be approved subject to further clarifications

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 27 August 2015 to consider five applications: an installation from Southbank Mosaics to commemorate 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare, an array of statues from Sokari Douglas Camp to commemorate the abolition of slavery, a special historic post box to celebrate 500 years of Royal Mail, a competition of public art installations from Christ's Hospital School and a proposal from the Rothschild Foundation to illuminate the bridges of London in a creative and unified way.
4. Full details of the application are available on request from the Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries.

Proposals

Southbank Mosaics CIC – Shakespeare 400

5. Southbank Mosaics have over 250 public art installations throughout London, and to mark 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare, they wish to install a mural made of durable mosaic in August/September 2016, or potentially earlier to coincide with other Shakespeare 400 celebrations.
6. The main contender for location is Silver Street, where Shakespeare spent a number of years lodging with a French family.
7. Funding is being sought from the Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund and Community Interest Levy, all of which have supported Southbank Mosaics on previous occasions.
8. All agreed that this would provide a great contribution to the Shakespeare 400 celebrations and series of events next year in the City of London.
9. The City Arts Initiative recommended this for approval subject to further clarifications on size, positioning and responsibility of maintenance.

Sokari Douglas Camp – All the World is now Richer

10. 'All the World is now Richer' was originally shown in the House of Commons in 2010 and made an appearance at St Paul's Cathedral 2014. The array of statues is a positive commemoration to the abolition of slavery.
11. The artistic merit of the proposal was highly appreciated, however the group agreed not to recommend the installation due to the presence of another similarly-themed sculpture in the City: 'Gilt of Cain' by Michael Visocchi & Lemn Sissay located in Fen Court.

12. All agreed the preferred location of Golden Gate Estate was not suitable for the following reasons: water penetration on a specific area of the estate, access being required for future reconstruction and redevelopment of nearby Great Arthur Estate, the potential harmful impact on a designated heritage area and the proposal not being contextual with the architecture of the estate.
13. The City Arts Initiative therefore recommended this proposal for rejection due to another similarly-themed sculpture and the unsuitable location.

Royal Mail – 500 Year Anniversary Special Postmark Post Box

14. A very few organisations celebrate 500 years in operation and the Royal Mail would like to commemorate this occasion with a special interactive and practical public art installation of an old fashioned post box.
15. A PR campaign will run alongside the project where any mail placed into the post box will receive a special 500 year postmark.
16. The preferred location of the applicant, which is Prince's Street where once stood the General Letter Office (1653-1666), was deemed unsuitable by the group due to lack of space and overcrowding.
17. Instead the group recommended an alternative site between St Martins Le Grand and King Edward Street, near to where the General Post Office first established its headquarters in 1829, and where mail coaches formerly departed for destinations all over the country.
18. The City Arts Initiative recommended this for approval subject to an alternative location being found.

Christ's Hospital Foundation – Artwork: Public Commission

19. Christ's Hospital School would like to commemorate their 350 year presence in the City and have proposed a permanent artwork to be located in the vicinity of the original school site. The site is now the office of Bank of America Merrill Lynch, adjacent to the remains of Christ's Church, Greyfriars at the junction of Newgate Street and King Edward Street.
20. Following a design competition and a short-listing process undertaken by the School in conjunction with the CoL and Bank of America Merrill Lynch, three separate proposals by three individual artists were submitted to the Panel for consideration.
21. Based on artistic merit, size and durability, the group unanimously preferred a proposal by Andrew Brown with his concept of a semi-figurative artwork in bronze depicting children marching through progression in education.
22. The specific spot for the artwork is on the modern section of stone wall (representing the footprint of the Wren church) adjacent to the existing bicycle stands on Newgate Street.

23. Other shortlisted proposals included Hilary Taylor with her concept of curved steel panels with cut-out shapes depicting children marching using shadows onto the footway, however a clear visual of the proposal was not provided and it was difficult for the group to imagine the end result.
24. Shawn Williamson was the other proposal, with his concept of the guiding and caring hand ushering children to their future, however the scale of the artwork was considered to be excessive and maintenance of Portland stone would require higher maintenance resources.
25. The City Arts Initiative recommended this for approval with the unanimous selection of preferred artist Andrew Brown being recommended to the applicant.

The Rothschild Foundation / GLA – The Illuminated River

26. The proposal aims to deliver a creative and unified lighting scheme for London's bridges, running from Tower Bridge to Albert Bridge. An international competition will be held to identify an inspiring concept that will turn the bridges of London into a permanent public art highlight and make the river a visitor destination and attraction in its own right.
27. Planned completion of the project is 2018 and initial seed funding from the Rothschild Foundation and Mayor of London has been secured with a fundraising strategy now in place.
28. All agreed the proposal appears to be an exciting concept, however a number of issues were raised by the group around the lighting design consultation process and aspects of control/strategy once the lighting has been installed.
29. Since the group met, Simon Fourmy from the Rothschild Foundation has confirmed that consultation with stakeholders and bridge owners is paramount to project success. This includes:
 - a. A Working Group (chaired by the GLA with CoL representation from CHL and DBE) which continues to play a key role in shaping the project;
 - b. The designs submitted through an international competition process being initially be assessed by a large group of stakeholders including a representative from CAI (this group will arrive at a shortlist of four proposals)
 - c. A small and expert jury which will then decide the winner from the four shortlisted proposals (it is thought that this will not include CoL or an local authority representation)..
30. The Rothschild Foundation also advises that bridge lighting controls will remain with authorities and that being a part of any light shows created for special events will be at the discretion of those authorities, albeit when a pan-London / national celebration is marked, it is expected that the City would take part.

31. The City Arts Initiative recommended this for approval following the clarification provided above.
32. Following a letter from the Mayor of London to the Chairman of your Policy and Resources Committee about this project, a short briefing with the Chairman and relevant officers has taken place. In that meeting, the Chairman expressed the view that this project fully aligns with the City Corporation's Supporting London Agenda and that he is therefore in support of the recommendation to approve.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

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

Conclusion

34. This report summarises the discussions of the City Arts Initiative and presents recommendations in relation to the public art applications considered on 27 August 2015.

Background Papers:

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

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