

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Culture, Heritage & Libraries	25 November 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 5 November 2015. The group considered the following proposals:

- a) Banksy (CoL Built Environment) – Steelyard Passage
- b) Premier – The Dream Jar Trial for Save the Children
- c) Barbara Princic - Wooden Mushroom Houses
- d) Mexican Embassy – Building Rain
- e) Heartstone - Chandra's London
- f) Display Gallery - Forms Shaped Through Time

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that:

1. Banksy be approved for preservation using appropriate covering, to be specified in accordance with requirements
2. Premier be approved subject to further clarification on location and potential electrical requirements.
3. Barbara Princic be rejected for lack of artistic merit and suitable space
4. Mexican Embassy be referred to Broadgate Estates (and located within Broadgate Circus) with agreement of applicant
5. Heartstone be referred to Museum of London with whom the applicant is already in discussion, due to photographic focus of Martin Parr exhibitions at Barbican and Guildhall Art Gallery (in house and on-street) at same time
6. Display Gallery be approved subject to further clarification and commission agreement

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 5 November 2015 to consider five applications: a recently discovered and fading Banksy work on Steelyard Passage, The Dream Jar Trail to celebrate 100 years since Roald Dahl's birth and support Save the Children, a selection of small Mushroom Wooden Houses, a large outdoor bronze structure from the Mexican Embassy, a photographic exhibition depicting 'Chandra's London', and Forms Shaped Through Time, displayed to coincide with an exhibition at the Display Gallery in Holborn.
4. Full details of the application are available on request from the Director of Culture, Heritage & Libraries.

Proposals

Banksy – Steelyard Passage (Built Environment)

5. Banksy is an English-based graffiti artist, political activist and film director whose real identity is unknown. One of his latest projects was 'Dismaland' in Weston-Super-Mare, North Somerset, which sold out every day of its five-week run, attracting 150,000 visitors and adding £20m to the local economy.
6. This particular piece of Banksy art was recently discovered by the Department of the Built Environment in Steelyard Passage and its authenticity has been confirmed in Martin Bull's book 'Banksy: Location & Tours' (2010).
7. All agreed to preserve the Banksy street art using an inexpensive but appropriate covering with an image of the original work (unfaded) shown on a small part of the protective sheet. This was preferred over restoration.
8. The City Arts Initiative also proposed that Built Environment repeat this process for other confirmed pieces by the artist in the City and it was agreed that this would be put forward for their consideration.
9. The associated work and costs should be covered by Built Environment.
10. The City Arts Initiative recommended preserving the Banksy artwork on Steelyard Passage using a protective covering.

Premier - The Dream Jar Trail for Save the Children

11. Premier are the organisation responsible for the hugely successful London Paddington Bear Trail in 2014, which raised almost £1million for Child Line with mentions of #PaddingtonTrail reaching over 37.5m Twitter accounts.
12. This time round they are celebrating 100 years of Roald Dahl, as well as the new movie release of The BFG (Big Friendly Giant), a film starring Mark Rylance and Penelope Wilson. Their new trail – released at the same time as the film – sees 50 giant dream jars located throughout London (8-10 in the City) in support of Save the Children and other charities.
13. This proposal is fully funded between the following organisations; Roald Dahl Foundation, London & Partners, Entertainment One Films, Save the Children and other associated charities and sponsors.
14. The sculptures will not contain any reference to the film release, and corporate sponsorship branding will be kept to a minimum, similar to the arrangement for Shaun the Sheep (with no more than 20% of statue plaque being used for logo and credit).
15. Locations are to be confirmed and installation is planned for Jul/Aug 2016; the majority share of the trail being located in the City “where dreams are big” will enable the City Information Centre and the City’s children’s libraries to play a headline role and help to drive families to our services
16. The City Arts Initiative recommended this proposal for approval subject to clarification of locations and confirmation of any potential electrical requirements.

Barbara Princic – Wooden Mushroom Houses

17. Barbara Princic currently holds a teaching position at the Academy of Fine Arts & Design, University of Ljubljana in Slovenia, however she applied to the City Arts Initiative as an individual artist and designer.
18. The applicant mentions Hyde Park as a possible location and she will be informed that this is not under the management of the City of London.
19. All agreed this proposal did not have sufficient artistic merit. There is also a lack of suitable open space to exhibit the wooden structures.
20. The City Arts Initiative recommended this proposal be rejected for lack of artistic merit and suitable space.

Mexican Embassy – Building Rain

21. As part of the ‘Year of Mexico in the United Kingdom 2015’, the Mexican Embassy has proposed the installation of a large bronze sculpture by artist

Paloma Torres. The sculpture is part of an ongoing public art collection titled 'Contemporary Mexican Sculpture: The Vision of Four Artists'.

22. The sculpture – Building Rain – has already been on display in Canary Wharf, and other sculptures as part of the collection have been exhibited throughout London, including Trafalgar Square.
23. All agreed the proposal has artistic merit; however the weight and dimensions of the sculpture are very large and would not be suitable for their desired location of Peter's Hill, near St Paul's Cathedral.
24. Broadgate Estates was also approached to host the sculpture, as they have ample space on Broadgate Circus. They are keen to do so, and the proposal has the permission and support of all relevant parties.
25. The Mexican Embassy will cover all associated costs.
26. The City Arts Initiative recommended this proposal be referred to Broadgate Estates for location in Broadgate Circus.

Heartstone – Chandra's London

27. Heartstone is a non-profit organisation which aims to build greater contact, communication and understanding across different races, cultures and generations.
28. The idea behind the proposal for Chandra's London is a request for a public photography exhibition using poster/advertising space.
29. The organisation has previously collaborated with the Metropolitan Police and Transport for London on public art and photography projects.
30. The City Arts Initiative considered the proposal but felt there is a potential clash with other public photography exhibitions taking place at the same time – these include the two Martin Parr photography exhibitions at Barbican and Guildhall Art Gallery – the latter of which seeks to show the unseen City (which this proposal also looks to explore).
31. The applicant advised the Committee that she was in discussion with the Museum of London regarding a potential exhibition there and it was agreed that this should be referred to them.
32. The City arts Initiative agreed to reject the Heartstone application, referring it to the Museum of London for consideration.

Display Gallery - Forms Shaped Through Time

33. This proposal was submitted by artist Sol Bailey Barker with the support of the Display Gallery, which is a contemporary commercial art gallery located in the Holborn area of the City of London.

34. To coincide with an exhibition focusing on landscapes and different cultural histories, the applicant is seeking to install two sculptures on Saint Andrew Street and/or along various locations of Holborn Viaduct.
35. Some funding has already been received from the Rose Foundation and private donors, and further applications have been made to the Arts Council and Elephant Grants.
36. The group believed that the sculptures did have good artistic merit; however it was also felt that this proposal was commercial and constituted as free advertising for the Display Gallery and the artists involved.
37. It was suggested a commission be charged to the artist and/or gallery if the sculptures were to be privately sold, and that the potential income be placed in the City of London Art Gallery Acquisition Fund. This was agreed by the City Arts Initiative.
38. The City Arts Initiative recommended this proposal be approved subject to further clarifications and a commission agreement.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

39. 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

40. This report summarises the discussions of the City Arts Initiative and presents recommendations in relation to the public art applications considered on 5 November 2015.

Background Papers:

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

Marcus Smith

City Culture Executive, Culture, Heritage and Libraries

T: 020 7332 3567

E: marcus.smith@cityoflondon.gov.uk