

## Imagine Maryland

**Date:** August 21, 2008  
**Location:** Maryland State Arts Council  
Baltimore, MARYLAND  
**Forum:** Public Art Focus Group  
**Facilitator:** Lauren Dugas Glover  
**Other Staff:** Carla Dunlap, Shirley Howard  
**Scribe:** Janel Cohen

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### **SUMMARY OF MAJOR THEMES:**

Create network for public art in the state that would serve, nurture, and invigorate artists, government, private sector, and the community.

Stimulate artists, government, private sector, and community for “epic public art”

Educate artists, government, private sector, and community about public art and raise the bar for public art outcomes

Use public art to inspire creativity and imagination

### **SOME KEY QUOTES:**

“Challenge municipality”

“Maryland is a microcosm of the U.S. and it is exemplified in how we express ourselves through the arts”

“Public art works best when it touches the most people”

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### **RAW TRANSCRIPT OF THE MEETING:**

Good morning everyone. I am Lauren Dugas Glover, Program Director for the Maryland Public Art Program housed at the MSAC.

Welcome to all of you on behalf of MSAC and the Governor. Imagine MARYLAND - strategic planning process - key interviews, forums, survey. You can track progress online.

Introduction of DBED and MSAC staff: Andrea Vernot, Bill Pencek, Shirley Howard, Janel Cohen.

Before you leave please make sure you sign in so we can keep you updated with the process. Governor is very excited about the plan.

Lauren: We're going to begin with introductions -

- What gets you excited/jazzed?
  - Tornado took my house out and to fight post traumatic stress, I took up painting. My passion has been public art - for the community to create
  - Concerned about art - countywide art in public areas. I've been an artist all my life and would like to see artists' contributions to society recognized more - heard and respected.
  - Always have been interested in celebrating/enhancing "place"
  - I'm a new resident of Maryland and still getting to know the area, excited about getting involved on the local level
  - I'm an artist (all my life) - I love the arts, all kinds of art. I make my living as an artist.
  - Public spaces are starting to deteriorate and something needs to be done. The sculpture in my neighborhood is being eaten away. Would love to see public exhibits - using art to apply knowledge.
  - Public art legislation - labor of love, we felt very strong about it. Glad to see progress is being made.
  - What brought me here is the labor of love everyone has been put into this. Public art as "part of the discussion" - What jazzes me is the industry/economy of the individual artist and what he/she brings - you really see that in public art. How can we elevate the arts into a conversation that resonates with people who may not understand the economics of it?
  - My family wasn't that rich, but lived close enough to DC to go and see public art, and that instilled in me an appreciation - Don't need art to survive, need it to thrive.
  - I make sculpture/public art. Really good work jazzes me up - occasionally I see some things that are
  - I do mosaic murals and sculptures. I just moved back to Maryland and have been trying to build myself up as a public artist
  - Recently able to work on some public art, interesting way of looking at art.

We are asking a series of questions that we've been asking at our forums to get a sense for the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) of what it is doing well, how it can be better, what needs to be augmented.

- What do you value most about Maryland, what keeps you here, what brought you here, why is this your home?
  - It's green
  - I've been in Maryland now for almost 30 years, and what initially brought me and my wife was employment, we had an opportunity to find work here. But traveling as I do as an artist, I can see that Maryland is one of the top states for the arts. People appreciate art here
  - Proximity to Washington, DC - when I'm not feeling creative, I can go to a museum and get inspired/energized
  - Maryland is a wonderful place to live
  - All my family moved to New England, but I stayed. Proximity to places
  - Ability - private funds
  - Cosmopolitan - ethnic cultural diversity, education and wealth, more stable
  - Living in an area designed by an architect - it's beautiful to live near, part of the reason I still live there - attractive piece of architecture

- Transportation hub, good highway system. The ability to move around to other jurisdictions easily – Philadelphia, New York
- I grew up in California and was pretty involved in public art projects. I have a studio here in Baltimore that is reasonable/accessible, affordability is important for artists.
- I'm always looking all over the country for opportunities (as an artist) so my focus is not always on Maryland; but I enjoy the museum community, access, variety of changing exhibitions, artist-friendly community and workspace keeps me here
- There is art outreach from institutions. Wonderful that we have access to art.
- Entertainment options/ professional sports/ diversity in terms of geography
- Easy access to big cities (Philadelphia, Washington, DC)
- Quality/mix/volume of arts
- I'm still getting to know the region and the area - what impressed me is the resounding diligence/number of newcomers from countries across the world - immigrant community and the vibrancy it adds to the state – living among diverse cultures – Strong statement that this population chooses to make Maryland their home
- Interested in grass roots efforts in the arts - volunteers committed to making arts and culture a part of their community
- Maryland/metro area, full of history that has supported and grown a strong middle class. A lot to think about in Maryland - a lot of history - we have many cultures - everything is here.
- Geographic diversity speaks to the various cultures – boating, governing, farming, mountains, fishing
- Strong reality that artists are not separated from economics - good base here to develop participation and concern in the arts. Very diverse on different levels.
- Affordable for artists
- Questions: has anyone lived here all their lives?
  - ♣ Most have moved here from elsewhere
- Break up into 2 groups - What are the major issues facing your community - What do you see (challenges, fears) on the horizon about the artist community?
  - Group #1 We were very public art focused
    - ♣ People and integrated art
    - ♣ Funding
    - ♣ Lack of public art and art planning in major metropolitan areas
    - ♣ Artists feel disconnected - silos between suburban, urban, and rural communities
    - ♣ Public art works best when it touches the most people - identifying new ways/mechanisms/places to implement public art
    - ♣ Vandalism, maintenance and conservation
    - ♣ Integration of arts disciplines - across performing, visual, etc.
    - ♣ Need Maryland to create its own inspirational models - projects that are our own
    - ♣ Integration of public art into tourism or cultural heritage
    - ♣ Audience development and attendance

- ♣ Return of venues/parades - venues for participation, special event opportunities
- Group #2
  - ♣ It's hard to get the players together (corporations, museums, government, artist communities). No surge to make public art happen
  - ♣ Educational programming
  - ♣ What examples are representative of Maryland
  - ♣ Really need educational programming - bring arts education back to and in schools
  - ♣ Money/funding
  - ♣ Need local plans that integrate public art and the arts to show the value of the arts as a part of a locale's identity
  - ♣ Need to create vision of and implement how various entities come together to support a physical place and public identity -- Seattle's new sculpture garden and public art as a whole illustrates the cities value of public art.
  - ♣ Needs more connections between artists – dialogue, lectures, presentations, more opportunities for artists to interact with one another
  - ♣ Lack of public artist or artist nexus. An organization to group artists from a variety of different communities.
    - Cheap studio space could provide that nexus. Communities should explore what can be done to make it affordable for artists.
- Break up into 2 groups - We are going to problem solve. We've identified some issues – Now what are 5 action items; positive changes that could happen in the next 5 years to address some of these issues?
  - Group #1
    - ♣ Find out other funding models for public art - nationally, internationally
    - ♣ Don't rely solely on public funding – identify private support/funding to augment public funding
    - ♣ Need to create a catalyst in every region - create alternative spaces in communities - multi-discipline
    - ♣ Build political capital spark public interest (i.e. Millennium Park) - visibility of a work-of-art that would attract the public - need a big public art project - get people to come; create interest in art - critical mass around that venue - could spawn economy, interest, etc. Synergy. Working to create dialogue and activity. Maryland could have a public art project that would draw people, garner attention
    - ♣ Need to look at arts councils and make sure they're doing everything they should/could be doing. Multi-level outreach.
    - ♣ "A Happening" that connects all regions of Maryland - Everyone makes an art piece and they all get strung together. Arts Councils each does a piece. Something to kick off, let everyone know that there's something going - to generate excitement.

- ♣ Information tool kit about how to do public art and how to get it from both artists and sponsors' perspectives. Coordination of information through technology.
- Group #2
  - ♣ Implementation of the existing public art legislation - getting the advocates and arts council behind it
  - ♣ Amend the law to mandate funding - a 1% for public art statewide
  - ♣ Create a synergistic visual arts project – kick-off event that would underscore commitment to public art.
  - ♣ The arts council should create the most robust information hub possible - to raise the standards/expectations/etc for public art
  - ♣ Robust artists' directory component - separate from the regular artist directory – connect artists, government and private sector
  - ♣ Should include a call for artists component for private developers or sponsors - match clients with artists
- What do you know about MSAC? What else would you like to know? What can MSAC do?
  - Know about artists' registry. What I would like to see as working artists -- there are so many artists in Maryland and I don't know if the public projects can accommodate and help them. I would like to see more private support that the arts community can work with - a lot of artists don't know who to contact - MSAC can help.
  - A lot of pluses, grants and funding, hard work.
  - Know nothing
  - Great that this year you could apply online for grants through the MSAC. I know they have a cycle for various disciplines so every few years different ones come up for funding - would like to see cross discipline collaborations with artists, musicians, poets, etc. cross fertilization.
  - Familiar with the grants program and registry.
  - Grants categories are too narrow. I filled out the survey and it doesn't mention public art. Too narrow focus on visual arts - I always have to shove myself into category that I don't feel is me. Visual art categories are far too narrow
  - Survey doesn't include public art or a category that defines the type of art created by public artists.
  - Registry and grants. Don't know what else. I think it's a good concept
  - Most familiar with grants program, and the process that council goes through to evaluate orgs to make sure they fulfill certain criteria, IAA, and CAC's. Lately involved with strategic planning, think it's a really good effort to hear from the public.
  - Vague notion of the MSAC, somewhat involved with grants, always felt I never qualified. Really good that MSAC is bringing people together and willing to reinvent themselves and look at new avenues.
  - Strong connection to the arts council. Focus on art as self-expression - what are other ways of using the arts.
  - Public art focus on war here in Maryland was shocking. It would be nice to counterbalance the focus on war mentality.
  - Don't know anything. Know that there is a public art ordinance.

- Information on public art - a lot of issues have come up when taking on a public art project - if someone was creating public art, could use support.
- Engage and educate political leadership to build awareness and support for public art and its opportunities.
- Provide technical assistance to communities for “how to” produce works, execute a program, maintain, etc. public art.
- Public relations to elevate awareness and role of and “results” of public art.
  
- 3 words to wrap up today’s discussion
  - Change can happen
  - Opening up, flow
  - Enlightening, interesting, good refreshments
  - Very interesting, new information
  - Revealing and affirming
  - Hopeful and connection
  - A new beginning
  - Possibilities, reflection, appreciation
  - Interactive, need more
  - Exciting, interesting, hopeful
  
- Thank you for coming today. Your insight is valuable.