



Maryland Public Art Commission

March 20, 2025

9:00-10:30 am

Virtual Meeting

Commissioners Attending:

Jerome Gray, Jamie Heater, Judy Kwon, Rebecca Massie Lane, Catherine Leggett, Chris Sloan, Molline Jackson, Flannery Winchester

Commissioners Absent:

MSAC Staff: Steven Skerritt Davis, Nora Howell, C. Ryan Patterson

Members of the Public: Robin Gower (rep: State Archives for Elaine Rice Bachmann)

Call to Order

Meeting Called to order at 9:04 am

Chair Remarks

Commission Chair Judy Kwon welcomed everyone to the first Commission meeting of 2025. She noted that the meeting's agenda was packed with content, so it was ok to proceed with the meeting.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

Rebecca Massie Lane motioned to approve the December 19, 2024, meeting minutes. Catherine Leggett seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously.

MSAC Executive Director Report

Steven Skerritt-Davis, MSAC Executive Director, provided an update to the Commission highlighting the following:



- A new Acting Secretary of Commerce, Harry Coker, is at Commerce. Former Secretary of Commerce Kevin Anderson has moved to a senior advisor position. We welcome Secretary Coker's Leadership.
- The Department of Commerce recently released a strategic plan that is available on the Commerce Website.
- MSAC welcomes two new staff members, ellie marie hernandez, special projects and grants assistant, and Abby Neyenhouse as Program Director of the Arts Capital grant program.
- Public Art Project Manager Nora Howell is now a full-time (PIN) state employee. The contractual position (previously filled by Nora) is retained for the Public Art Program, and filling that role should add staff capacity to the public art team.
 - We are happy to respond to the leadership and guidance from the Commission, which has advocated for increased staffing.
- Ryan Koons was moved into a full-time Maryland Traditions Program Director/State Folklorist position, and MSAC will add a position for a full-time Independent Artist Services Program Director. All of these will aid staff capacity across the council.
- The Arts Incubator Working Group looks at how the State can better support artists through arts organizations.
- Steven presented a total of grants awarded since the last Commission meeting, including the Public Art Across Maryland grant program, which awarded 38 grants for a total \$700,000.
- NEA update: There is no news regarding our Partnership Program, MSAC's partnership agreement with the NEA. MSAC receives close to \$1 million from the NEA. It equals about 3% of our overall budget.
- The Executive Committee of the Council has drafted a statement, and it was approved by the full Council last week. It is now being reviewed by departmental leadership and the Governor's office. Essentially, the council is saying they intend to stick to its mission, and continue its work in equity and inclusion for the good of the State, with the understanding that the risk is that they may lose federal funding in the long term or in the near future.

MSAC BUDGET:

- The General Assembly session is ongoing.
- The Governor's proposal was flat funding for the arts council, but with the elimination of the 1994 arts stabilization bill that ties our general fund appropriation to the growth of the general fund as well as a recommendation for \$3 million for arts capital. The



Department of Legislative Services has recommended a larger cut, but preservation of the arts stabilization mandate.

- Maryland Citizens for the Arts is focusing their advocacy on retaining the Arts Stabilization mandate.
- The final outcome will not be determined until the end of the Legislative Session.

Program Director's Report

C. Ryan Patterson, Program Director, Public Art provided an update on the recent work and observations:

- The Public Art Across Maryland grant program recently completed the FY25 grant cycle, awarding 38 grants, totaling almost \$700,000, across 13 counties. This program is a model that is unique in offering conservation funding and looked to nationally be othe states.
 - 35 New Artworks Grants were awarded (\$623,433)
 - 3 Public Art Conservation grants (\$61,015)
- The Executive Committee and the Committee on Collection Management have recently established and held their first meetings. Both Committees have set specific goals that also become the overall goals for the Commission's work throughout the year. One of these goals is having a broader, more equitable geographic impact.
- Looking at a map of areas that receive both Artwork Commissions and PAAM grants, we begin to see how there are service gaps from both programs, but when we combine the two, we are close to reaching the whole state.
- This impact could be increased by finding ways to include public artwork commissions on areas where we are currently restricted from working, such as Community Colleges and State Parks- locations that serve large populations of the public but are considered ineligible for the program.

Executive Committee Report

- The Executive Committee met on February 4.
- The Committee is focused on onboarding of new commissioners, geographic equity in our work, and succession planning and nominations of new commissioners.
- There will be several seats turning over in June of 2025 so the Committee will be looking closer at this and preparing nominations to replace those rotating off.

- We will also focus on assembling a standard packet of onboarding documents for new commissioners.

Committee on Collection Management- Judy Kwon

- The Committee on Collection Management met on March 4
- This Committee focuses on understanding the Commission's role in the care and maintenance of the collection and its obligation to preserve it in the long term.
- The Committee will also focus on establishing standardized signage and plaques to make artworks recognizable as part of this commission's work.
- Research will be done to better understand the existing legislation as well as look at other state arts agency collection management policies.
- Judy Kwon also noted that there should be an agreement in place with each user agency/campus to clarify and acknowledge whose responsibility it is to maintain the work over time. As things stand there is a lot of ambiguity.
- By getting documenting the State's collection through a collection management system, the Commission can help the state be accountable for its investments and avoid the issue of pieces going missing or being removed from it's location because there were no records in place to acknowledge it's part of a collection.
- Judy invited Ryan to talk about the current status of the Maryland 9/11 Memorial Exhibit at the World Trade Center.
 - The Maryland Port Administration is ending it's contract with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & Arts to operate the Top of the World Observation Deck on the 27th floor of the World Trade Center. \
 - Top of the World has been home to the Exhibit portion of the 9/11 Memorial for Maryland's exhibit, a portion of the overall memorial designed by Ziger/Snead, and part of the Commission's collection. MPA has told Commerce/MSAC the exhibit needs to be removed.
 - MSAC has proposed the relocation of the exhibit to the Lobby of the WTC to a) remove it from the 27th floor and b) maintain access in proximity to the memorial.
 - Currently, there are no formal agreements in place. Staff will continue to update the Commission as discussions proceed with the MPA and the architects who designed the memorial.

- Commissioner Leggett suggested that this was potentially a positive solution to a negative situation and hoped that a resolution could be found that would not have too high a cost, but would increase public access to the exhibit.
- Steven noted that it's good to hear that support from the Commission and MSAC also believes it's a best-case scenario, and committed to keeping Catherine and Rand (both emeritus commissioners who were involved with the creation of the 9/11 memorial) updated on the status, and will be back in touch once Ziger Snead provides a quote to assist with the relocation.
- Commissioner Gray suggested that the best outcome would be to move the exhibit by September 11 of the current year.
 - Ryan Agreed, noting that September 11, 2026 will mark the 25th anniversary since he attacks, and having the exhibition relocated in advance of that anniversary is a priority.
- House Bill 961
 - There is currently a bill going through the legislature that guarantees public artists retain copyright/artist rights to any projects that receive state funding. It would be very beneficial to artists if it passes.
 - Ryan elaborated that Delegate Elizabeth Embry introduced the Public Artist Rights Bill. It received some very positive testimony from artists and former Commissioner Kathy O Dell. It has since passed the House and moved to the Senate, but where things are and if it will advance is unclear.
 - If it passes, the Bill will protect artist rights on any capital projects that receive state funding, including public art, whether MSAC or another agency administers the contract.
 - Any advocacy or testimony in support of the arts, or this bill, should be directed to the Maryland Citizens for the Arts, who can advise Commissioners on how to connect their advocacy with our elected representatives.

Projects Report

- Ryan introduced Nora Howell, Public Art Project Manager, to report on ongoing projects, beginning with works nearing completion.
 - Aurora Robson's "Lovers Spat" was recently installed at St. Mary's College of Maryland's Dodge Performing Arts Center. There will be a dedication event on March 26 to celebrate the completion of this project.
 - The installation crew from Ball-Nouges Studios traveled to Maryland from Los Angeles in January to install "Wellness Loop", the first of two commissions for



the College of Health Professions at Towson University. This was an exterior sculpture and took diligence and resilience to be installed over the coldest months we have experienced in years. When completed, the installation will be landscaped and include two benches below the sculpture. It should be completed before the close of the semester.

- Jackson Jarvis Studios' large-scale mosaic installation for the Catonsville Courthouse is currently in fabrication and should be installed later this year.
- Artworks in other stages of production:
 - Seven projects have moved from Artist Selection to Contracting & Procurement. This is the most active project we have ever had; it can also be difficult to move through this stage when we have little oversight of the process.
 - We've finally begun our first (and only) community college project at Baltimore City Community College. This is not subject to the community college exemption faced by other institutions.
 - Branly Cadet was selected as the sculptor for the Maryland Black Patriot monument in Annapolis, noting this is not coming through our normal commission process, but a special project conducted in conjunction with the Commission on Artistic Property.
 - Rob Ley was selected for our first commission project at the College Park campus is for the Zupnik School of Engineering.
 - Mike Sazbo was selected to create a sculpture for Blackwell Hall at Salisbury University.
 - Yiqiao Wang was selected by the Maryland School for the Deaf to create an artwork for the Veditz building. She is primarily a 2D artist. Staff will help her translate her work into 3D or at least a more resilient material for this setting.
 - Victor Ekpuk, who is creating a piece for Bowie State University's College of Arts & Humanities, is currently in Berlin to observe the fabrication of his mosaic at Franz Meyer Glass. We expect this piece to be installed in the Summer of 202

Open Discussion and Sharing

- Rebecca Massie Lane affirmed that there is interest in public art in state parks and community college campuses.
- Chris Sloan: The city of Cumberland has spent about \$16 million to renovate its downtown area. The city developed a new public art master plan that included the renovation of the entire streetscape. The city is now at the beginning of implementing the first projects at locations outlined in that master plan. The first project will be a

large mural at the corner of Baltimore and Mechanic Street. It's a community-engaged process that will rely a lot on private funding. We are excited to see this going and it will be the first of several projects taking shape in Cumberland over the next few years. The Mayor is deeply committed to the initiative and hopes to find more opportunities to include public art on private property as well.

- Ryan: Highlighting the recent Council meeting in Chestertown, where the city has formed a public art commission that has done a very thoughtful job of installing sculptures donated from a private collection. At the same time, the Kent Cultural Alliance has conducted multiple sessions of an Artist in Residence program focused on the local lands and waters. It's a beautiful concept, and the results speak for themselves. Hopefully, it's a model that can be replicated across the state.
- Jamie Heater expressed enthusiasm for the collection management work and the impact of the PAAM projects. She also suggested that there should be more opportunities for publicly promoting the work of the Commission and the Commissioners themselves, suggesting the website could be streamlined to make it easier for the public to find the Commissioners and projects.
 - Ryan agreed that a review and revision of the website to be more streamlined is overdue and something worth focusing on.

Adjourn

Judy Kwon motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Jamie Heater seconded the motion.

The motion was passed, and the meeting adjourned at 10:17 am