



Cambridge Arts Council

57 Inman Street Cambridge, MA 02139 (617) 349-4380

RICHARD BOLTON - ART INSIGHT PROGRAM
MOBILE FORUM PROJECT

Program Concept - After 11 years of supporting mainly permanent, site-specific public art, the Public Art Committee in 1989 with the CAC's public art director, developed the Art Insight program. The program was designed to extend the boundaries of the artist's role in society by promoting public participation in solution-oriented public art.

Art Plan and Call to Artists (Open Competition) distributed nationally by the Cambridge Arts Council.

Artists Selection Process

Artists advised of the program via the Call to Artists, press release and public service announcements. Sixty-five (65) artists from across the country submitted slides and applications for review by the art jury.

Art Jury recommended by the program director and the Public Art Committee and approved by CAC:

Stella McGregor (Hispanic Woman - runs alternative gallery, The Space in Boston.)

Helaine Posner - Curator - Women's Museum, Washington, D.C.

Dana Friis-Hansen - Curator - M.I.T. List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge

Wendy Feuer - Director - NYC Art in Transit Program

From the pool of 65 artists, five were selected to be put under contract to research and develop projects over a one year period. Their proposals were submitted and presented to the seven member Public Art Committee for review and approval. Two artists were rejected from the program and the following three were approved:

Richard Bolton - "Storefront for Democracy"/"Mobile Forum"

Mierle Laderman Ukeles - Danahy Park "Recycling Art Project"

Krzysztof Wodiczko - in development

Administration:

The director and the Public Art Committee develop conceptual program ideas. Budgets and artists' proposals are reviewed and approved/rejected by the Public Art Committee. The administrator monitors the artist's work and spending and signs off on invoices.

HOW JURORS ARE SELECTED

- 1) Public Art Committee members, staff, council members, art committee participants, as well as the community recommended names of qualified art professionals to serve as art jurors.

Once the Arts Council receives a recommendation, the staff contacts the person by phone and informs that person that s/he has been recommended as a qualified art juror and they are asked if they are interested in serving. Most individuals say yes and submit their credentials to CAC.

CAC has approximately 55 resumes of qualified professionals on file at this time and is constantly seeking new people.

IMPORTANT: CAC tries not to have an art juror serve more than once to insure that the decision-making and artist selection choices are spread around.

Juries are carefully put together by the administrator and the Public Art Committee to make sure program guidelines can be met and to be appropriate for the type of commission, (e.g. in a project like Tobin School/Zebra the jury was seeking only local artists who could produce an outdoor work that took into consideration the site and use of the area. Jurors were local and knowledgeable about artists working within these parameters).

Art Insight - jurors were going to seek artists with experience in socially-interactive art. It was imperative that the artists be experienced because of the potential controversial nature of dealing with social issues in this type of art.

PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE

Seven member sub-committee of the Cambridge Arts Council, chaired by a CAC Council member.

Members are qualified art professionals from various disciplines who either live or work in Cambridge and are willing to serve for one two-year term on the committee. Terms are staggered to ensure continuity. Artists, curators, museum directors, architects, designers, conservators, historians, writers, graphic designers, art educators are professions represented on the committee.

CRITERIA FOR ART

That it be of the highest quality, site specific, durable, and maintainable.

ARTIST'S BUDGETS AND CONTRACTS

Since artists are often creating a work throughout a contract period and what that work will be like or be is often unknown at the signing of the contract, a great deal of trust and faith is exercised throughout the contract period.

Flexibility and trust is important because artist's are developing and exploring creative ideas throughout the project term. Often costs are not known although they are estimated at each phase of a project. The CAC does the best it can with fixed budgets and raising funds from outside sources as projects necessitate.

SUMMARY TIMELINE

1989 - Program director and the Public Art Committee developed the concept of the Art Insight program.

Art Plan, and Call to Artists and press releases announce the program to the public and the art community.

Public Art Committee recommended an art jury to the CAC for Art Insight.

Cambridge Arts Council approved recommended jury.

11/2/89 - Public art jury met and reviewed artists' submissions for Art Insight. 5 artists selected to research and develop projects for Art Insight.

1990 - Richard Bolton and other artists begin researching and developing projects for Art Insight.

Bolton presented proposals to the Public Art Committee on: 2/7/90, 12/5/90, 6/12/91.

STOREFRONT FOR DEMOCRACY

PROPOSAL approved by the Public Art Committee (12/5/90 and 6/12/91)

1/18/91 - Bolton is placed under contract to fabricate and present Storefront for Democracy.

* see attached lists re: storefront rental and participants list.

8/91 - Bolton changes Storefront for Democracy to Mobile Forum

11/13/91 - Mobile Forum presented to the Public Art Committee and initially approved for further development.

1/92 - CAC raises issues with artist about where and how he has spent funding. Requests materials to review. Administrative and budget problems ensue.

4/92 - Artist submits accounting. Unacceptable.

6/92 - Final proposal submitted by Bolton to the Public Art Committee by mail. Conditionally approved.

8/92 - Bolton charges materials to CAC and does not pay invoices (\$8,500) after he is paid (\$15,000).

9/92 - Letters from administrator informing Bolton that problems are escalating (9/2/92).

10/9/92 - Bolton presents Mobile Forum to the Public Art Committee - safety issue, etc. still outstanding. CAC purchases steps. Committee thinks work must go out since it has been paid for.

10/92 - November schedule not approved. Legal advice sought.

Artist should be audited, ownership of equipment and materials determined, and performance schedule reviewed/litigated.



Cambridge Arts Council

57 Inman Street Cambridge, MA 02139 (617) 349-4380

MEMORANDUM TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: Annabelle Hebert, Executive Director

RE: Correspondence to Kenneth Reeves, Mayor,
from California Artist, Richard Bolton
"Mobile Forum" - A Temporary Public Art Project

DATE: November 6, 1992

Mr. Bolton has accused the Cambridge Arts Council staff of being "capricious" in his correspondence to the Mayor. Mr. Bolton was hired in January 1990 to develop a temporary public art project for Cambridge. In the fall of 1991 Mr. Bolton changed his approved public art project which necessitated his "starting over." The administrative difficulties the Council has been experiencing with this artist began in January 1992, shortly after Mr. Bolton moved to California and these problems have been thoroughly discussed with Donald Drisdell and Diane Wynshaw-Boris of the Legal Department. Per Mr. Bolton's contract with the City, he is obliged to do public presentations of his art project, Mobile Forum, in accordance with a "pre-approved schedule" by the Cambridge Arts Council.

Unfortunately, the schedule that Mr. Bolton presented to the Cambridge Arts Council on October 19 was not approved for the following reasons:

- 1) the schedule only allowed the Council twelve working days within which to prepare public announcements and publicity to ensure the public would be aware and participate in the project;
- 2) the intention of this public art program is to have substantive public involvement; on many occasions the Arts Council has asked this artist for a mailing list of people who were interviewed or involved in the development of Mobile Forum (community leaders, activists, organizations intended to be at and part of the presentation) and have not received this list for promotional use;
- 3) prior to Mr. Bolton leaving Cambridge in October, the Arts Council asked for materials from the Mobile Forum exhibit to review and use to further familiarize the Council staff with the product so the staff could substantively promote it; again, the artist ignored our requests.

Mr. Bolton has a very tight schedule since moving to California. He would like to get presentations of this project over and done with at his convenience. Unfortunately, what is convenient for the artist is not necessarily in the best interest of the community. The Council must have input in the scheduling of presentations and adequate time to educate and inform the community about the project. Mr. Bolton is not cooperating in this regard. In an attempt to work within his schedule needs, the Council has tried to be flexible and in several meetings discussed presentation of Mobile Forum for the spring of 1993, to which he was amenable. Now he is demanding more money if he is to do presentations in the spring.

Mobile Forum was not completed by the artist and available for review by the Council and the Public Art Committee until October 9th. Now that Mobile Forum is complete and ready for presentation, the Council needs time to schedule same and work with the artist and the community. Unfortunately, this artist wants to dictate to the Council what will happen and when.

Added to the problem is Mr. Bolton's refusal to provide the Council with accounting information relative to his expended budget. He insists he cannot do presentations in the spring without more money, yet he has refused repeatedly to provide the Council with receipts and expenditure information so that the Council may make valid judgments in this regard.

It is important to understand that all of the problems with this artist are about administrative details -- not about the quality of the art or the project. This is not about "canceling schedules" or preventing him from doing his presentations -- it is about negotiating schedules, acquiring administrative information and working to provide the public with a number of meaningful presentations of Mobile Forum.

It simply is not a matter of our discussing presentations for a year. Until the Committee and the Council saw the actual completed art project in October it was impossible to prepare a presentation plan. The Arts Council rescheduled this artist's project three times over the past two years at his request. The Arts Council is hopeful that this artist will agree that presentations in the spring make sense and that he will provide the Council with information requested repeatedly since last January.

The artist has been fully paid for the development and fabrication of Mobile Forum. The remaining monies in his budget are for the public presentation phase of this project. Originally this artist was going to do three months of presentations of his project. Now he wants to do 14 days of presentations at his convenience, finish the project by November 15th and return to his home in California.

It would be an irresponsible use of public funding and truly capricious on the Council's part if we were to allow this artist to do so. Consequently, the Council will continue to try to negotiate with him a timely and meaningful public presentation schedule of the project for 1993.

CAMBRIDGE ARTS COUNCIL

RE: ARTIST - RICHARD BOLTON
PROJECT - MOBILE FORUM

A 22' Ryder truck transformed into an art exhibition focusing on rent control and real estate development in Central Square and Cambridgeport.

THE CAMBRIDGE ARTS COUNCIL'S POSITION

The Cambridge Arts Council has been working with Richard Bolton for the past two years. Mr. Bolton's final proposal for an art project entitled "Mobile Forum" was conditionally approved by the Council's Public Art Committee in June of 1992. Mr. Bolton planned to fabricate (retrofit) the truck in Cambridge during the month of August. The actual artwork was not completed until October and presented to the Public Art Committee at the DPW yard on October 9th. The Council conditionally approved the artist taking the art project "out on the street" for public presentations. Mr. Bolton did 7 public presentations in Cambridge from October 10th through October 17.

Due to late receipt of the October presentation schedule (10 days), there was not adequate time to prepare the public for Mobile Forum through the press nor public announcements. There was no positive nor negative public response to Mobile Forum received by CAC during or after the October presentations.

Mr. Bolton left Cambridge on October 19th and submitted a second proposed presentation schedule for November that was exactly the same as the October schedule to the Council on October 20th with a 12 day turn around for promotion and fill in space for "TBA" dates/sites presentations.

The Cambridge Arts Council rejected the proposed schedule because there was 1) an inadequate number of presentations planned for the public -- the patrons and beneficiaries of this public art project, 2) only 12 days time within which to create promotional materials to announce presentations to the public, and 3) the schedule did not tie into any specific Council nor City events appropriate to the project and for which the project was intended to be a part. The Council asked the artist to consider developing a presentation schedule for the spring of 1993, as he suggested during the summer.

Mr. Bolton wishes to put this project behind him now that he is living and working in California. He has been uncooperative since he left Cambridge and has not responded to administrative requests for information and materials that would allow the Council to successfully develop a presentation schedule for the public. The Council has rescheduled his presentation plans three times in the past two years at his request for his personal convenience. The Council, as the client, feels that the schedule must be appropriate to its needs to ensure a successful project and public education and promotion.

The artist wishes to dictate when his obligations to the City are fulfilled; per his contract that position is inappropriate. Public presentation of Mobile Forum is the most important part of this artist's obligation to the City/Council. The limited number of presentations and the November (final) schedule he has proposed to the Council is unacceptable.

If presentations are scheduled for the spring, now that Mobile Forum has been seen and reviewed by the Council and Committee, it is more likely there will be public participation. Mobile Forum as an art project is an excellent, didactic exhibit which fairly explores both sides of rent control/property development issue in Cambridge. However, it is a complex exhibit and public art project that requires audience development and education that can only be accomplished cooperatively and with advance planning.

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CAMBRIDGE ARTS COUNCIL - ART INSIGHT PROGRAM

After 11 years of supporting mainly permanent, site-specific, public art, CAC initiated a temporary public art program in 1989, titled "Art Insight." The program was designed to extend the boundaries of the artist's role in society by promoting public participation in solution-oriented public art.

"Socially-interactive art" -- as this genre is called by the art world -- includes artists whose main art focus is on relevant social issues. It is important to note that it is the artist's intention not only to raise public consciousness about an issue but also to substantively enlist public participation in the creation of probable solutions to problems. This is a critical public art that encourages substantive interaction between the public and the artist to examine important social issues and offer probable solutions to specific problems.

From the outset, CAC anticipated that artists who do socially-interactive art would require substantial time, community access and support to address important social issues in Cambridge. The artists will dramatically impact the Cambridge community -- the public -- as well as the field of public art. Critical to their success is the financial support to carry out their visions.

Three artsits -- Mierle Laderman Ukeles, Krzysztof Wodiczko and Richard Bolton -- were selected through a national open competition by the following five art jurors: curator, Helaine Posner (National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington); gallery director, Stella McGregor (The Space gallery, Boston); curator, Dana Friis-Hansen (MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge); and public art director, Wendy E. Feuer (NYC Transit Authority).

NOV. 1989



ART INSIGHT PROGRAM:

After 11 years of supporting mainly permanent, site-specific, public art, CAC initiated a temporary public art program in 1989, titled "Art Insight." The program was designed to extend the boundaries of the artist's role in society by promoting public participation in solution-oriented public art.

"Socially-interactive art" -- as this genre is called by the art world -- is based on the philosophy that art has a place in public life and can be an integral part to the solutions of particular social problems. Nationally, it includes artists whose main art focus is on social issues ranging from aging, waste disposal, environmental management, uses of mass media, and housing, to racism, energy sources, and the quality of education. It is important to note that it is the artist's intention not only to raise public consciousness about an issue but also to substantively enlist public participation in the creation of probable solutions to problems. This is a critical and pragmatic public art that encourages substantive interaction between the public and the artist to examine important social issues and offer probable solutions to specific problems.

ARTIST SELECTION:

Richard Bolton was one of three artists selected through a national open competition in November, 1989 by the following four art jurors: curator, Helaine Posner (National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington); gallery director, Stella McGregor (The Space gallery, Boston); curator, Dana Friis-Hansen (MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge); and public art director, Wendy E. Feuer (NYC Transit Authority).

The selection panel was made up of three women (one Hispanic - Stella McGregor) and one male. Two local professionals were selected to serve on the panel because of their knowledge of artists in the area accomplishing socially-interactive, temporary public art (Mr. Bolton was living and working in Cambridge at the time of his selection).

Sixty-five artists from across the country submitted their slides and applications for review by this jury. The jurors were seeking artists who had demonstrated a long-term commitment to working in a public arena.

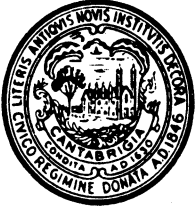
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RICHARD BOLTON - "MOBILE FORUM":

"Mobile Forum" is a traveling, temporary, public art project created by artist Richard Bolton. The project aims to create an opportunity for detailed public discussion about housing (rent control) and real estate development in Central Square and Cambridgeport.

The artwork consists of a 22' truck transformed by the artist into a resource library. The truck was to incorporate a variety of informative resources, including a detailed timeline history, key planning documents, relevant news reports, advocacy materials produced by activists, and information about available housing services in the community, as well as a display of video interviews with key activists, developers, and elected officials. The goal of the project were many: to create an archive of information about housing and development issues that affect the community, to present these issues in a complex manner, incorporating a wide variety of viewpoints, and to expose a large public to these issues. In addition, through this examination of the social, political, and economic underpinnings of development, it was hoped that a greater understanding of the community's identity would be gained.

Individuals and groups on both sides of the issues seek a forum and publicity for their points of view. Richard Bolton was not only to provide that forum but an artwork of large proportion designed to attract attention to the issue and the dialogue.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

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TEL 349-4300

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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

November 16, 1992

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached a response to Awaiting Report Item No. 35, regarding the Mobile Forum, received from Anabelle Hebert, Executive Director of the Cambridge Arts Council, concerning this issue.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Healy", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mev
attachment

Consent Agenda # 8

Awaiting Report Item No. 35,
regarding the Mobile Forum.

S 966

In City Council,

November 16, 1992

Placed on file