

Date: July 3, 2007



**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale**

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board consult with the public on permanent sites for the Biennale Sculptures identified in this report.*

## POLICY

The Arts Policy states that the Board provide a vibrant public realm and support the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

The Board has established “Review Guidelines for the Donation of Public Art or Memorials.”

## BACKGROUND

In 1998, the Board started working with Buschlen Mowatt Foundation and Galleries to facilitate temporary sculpture exhibits in parks along English Bay and Coal Harbour. The public’s response to these exhibits has been very positive.

The Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale was incorporated as a registered not-for-profit and charitable foundation in 2004. Current president and founder, Barrie Mowatt manages the sculpture exhibits in conjunction with the Governing Board of the Biennale. In August of 2005 the Park Board entered into a contract with the Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale for a series of temporary exhibitions of sculptures in City parks.

In October 2005, the first of the exhibits covered by the agreement was mounted. Twenty-three sculptures were installed on public land, educational components were developed in partnership with Simon Fraser University and lesson plans for grades 1-12 were provided on the Biennale website. Signage on site, maps and cell phone tours also provided information on the works. The Biennale drew, and continues to draw, a range of responses and sparks debates on the merit of the exhibit as an entity and, more often, of specific sculptures. In general it can be said that public art inspires reflection and stimulates an articulation of the values people find in the public spaces that they frequent.

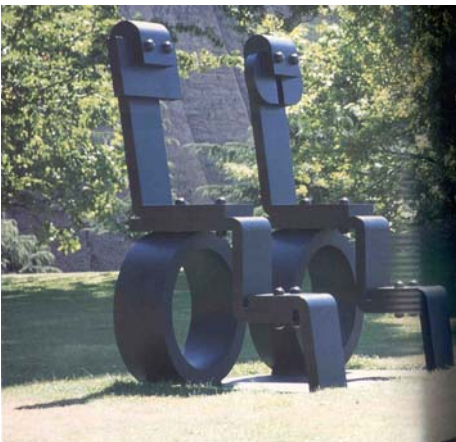
On May 24, 2007 representatives from the Biennale met with staff and proposed that a number of sculptures from the 2005-2007 Biennale Exhibition be loaned in perpetuity to the Park Board. Their proposal is that they own or represent the owners of the sculptures and that the Park Board confirm sites for the sculptures that will be on permanent public display. Our preferred approach is a donation that the Park Board would own outright, however we will ensure through our agreement with the Biennale Foundation that the public will always have access to these sculptures.

The four works currently under consideration include:



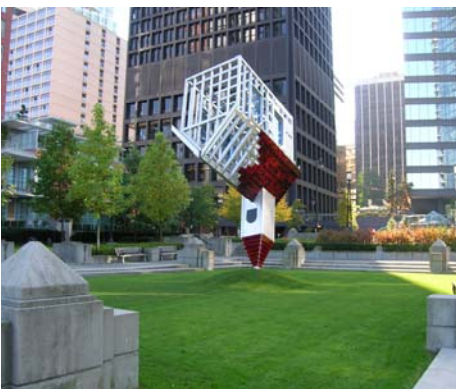
**Bernar Venet’s “217.5 Arcs X 13” is currently installed in Morton Triangle.**

Originally installed on Sunset Beach, this work proved unstable on sand and has been temporarily relocated onto a concrete pad at Morton Triangle. The Sunset Beach location is the Biennale’s proposed long-term site for this sculpture. The sculpture foundation at this site will be upgraded if it becomes a permanent sculpture location.



**Sorel Etrog’s “King and Queen,” is currently installed in Harbour Green Park.**

This work was also installed on the slope above Sunset Beach as part of the year 2000, “Vancouver International Sculpture Project.” The Sunset Beach location is the Biennale’s proposed long-term site for this sculpture.



**Dennis Oppenheim’s “Device to Root Out Evil” is currently installed in the upper plaza of Harbour Green Park.**

The current location is also the Biennale’s proposed long-term site for this sculpture.



**Michel Goulet’s “Echoes” is currently installed by the concession at Sunset Beach.**

The Kitsilano Beach area next to the Watermark Restaurant is the Biennale’s proposed long-term site for this sculpture.

At the Planning Committee meeting of June 20, 2006 Barrie Mowatt presented an update on the Biennale. At that time he indicated that their hope was that two pieces from each Biennale would become permanent legacy pieces that would remain in the public domain. Staff advised the Committee that all donated work would need to go through the standard public art review process.

As these sculptures are all proposed for parks which fall within the “City-wide parks” designation in the “Review Guidelines,” public consultation processes that would be followed include: signage posted on site for a three week period; a notice posted in the nearest public facility during the same period; notification of appropriate stakeholders; leafletting in a two-block radius of the site; an ad in the Vancouver Sun (a single quarter page ad with photos of all 4 sculptures); and if deemed necessary, public meetings.

All costs of the review will be paid by the Biennale, including on-site signage. On-site signage will be supplied by the Park Board at a cost not to exceed \$1,500.

Staff recommend that the Public Consultation process begin in September, 2007. A report outlining the results of the public consultation process can be expected in November 2007.

## **DISCUSSION**

Though these artworks are proposed for long-term loan, and not donation to the Park Board, the “Review Guidelines for the Donation of Public Art or Memorials” is the document that most effectively addresses the proposed impact on park land and on the communities who interact with park land. It outlines appropriate processes for the assessment of the proposal. Additional considerations will need to be addressed in the legal agreement with the Biennale should the Park Board chose to pursue the loan.

As noted above the 2005-2007 Biennale has sparked much debate. Staff has repeatedly responded to questions about the 18 month duration of the exhibition. Conflicting messages on the Biennale’s website, in press releases and advertising have caused

confusion. The Biennale has been informed that Park Board credibility with the public can be damaged when this happens. Because the exhibition is temporary, standard review processes for permanent installations of public art were not followed. It is now important to have an open, transparent and complete community consultation process.

The consultation process is proposed for September as past experience has shown processes over the summer are not always able to engage residents. Even though the works are, in most cases, not sited in their proposed long-term sites, having them available for viewing may be helpful for the public in their considerations. As moving the sculptures is complicated and expensive we are extending the temporary installations until the reviews are complete.

The “Review Guidelines” include a number of other processes beyond community consultation and while some of these have been completed as part of the process for temporary siting, a complete report addressing all of the results will need to be compiled on each of the works and their proposed sites for the Board’s consideration.

## **SUMMARY**

The Vancouver International Sculpture Biennale provides opportunities for the people of Vancouver and visitors to the city to interact with a wide range of sculpture in parks. Long-term siting of an artwork in a single location has a different impact on residents, especially those who regularly visit a given location. Following the established “Review Guidelines for the Donation of Public Art or Memorials” for proposed long-term loans of Biennale sculptures will assure the citizens of Vancouver that their input will be considered and that regular procedures are not being circumvented.

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