

Date: September 10, 2009



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Public Art Donation – Echoes 2003

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board accept the donation of Echoes 2003 by artist Michel Goulet from the Vancouver International Biennale, with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager

POLICY

The Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation adopted the *Arts Policy and Recommendations* in November 1993 and a renewed *Arts Policy* in December 2003. The *Arts Policy* states that the Park Board provides a vibrant public realm and supports the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

In 1988, the Park Board adopted the *Acceptance Guidelines for Long Term Gifts of Public Art* and in 1997 the Board adopted the *Guidelines for the Review of Proposed Donations of Public Art and/or Memorials to City-Wide Parks*. These guidelines are designed to ensure that high quality artwork and memorials of significance to a broad cross section of Vancouver residents, can be added to Vancouver's public spaces; and that community response is included in the considerations for the siting of the works.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Board received a proposal from the Vancouver Biennale Foundation to donate the sculpture, *Echoes 2003*, by Michel Goulet for installation in front of the Watermark Restaurant at Kitsilano Beach. On March 31, 2008 the Board directed staff to initiate the standard donations process.

A version of *Echoes 2003* was first installed at Sunset Beach as part of the inaugural Biennale exhibition from 2005 – 2007. The artwork has been enhanced from its original configuration of eleven chairs and now consists of sixteen stainless steel chairs with text inscriptions engraved on the seats.

DISCUSSION

Born in 1944 in Asbestos, Quebec, Artist-sculptor Michel Goulet lives and works in Montreal. His sculpture installations have been part of many important museum

exhibitions around the world. In 2008 he was awarded the 2008 Governor General's Award in Visual and Media Arts.

The artwork consists of normal sized chairs which encourages public interaction. The chairs will be installed in clusters of two or three to stimulate conversation and engagement with the art.

The Public Art Committee was requested to review the aesthetic elements of the work and siting and on April 15th, 2009. The artist, Park Board staff, Biennale staff and a member of the Public Art Sub-Committee met to review the piece and visit the proposed site. On July 13, 2009 the Public Art Committee offered its support for the proposed donation.

In May, 2009 Park Board staff completed the technical review of the piece and are satisfied with the technical elements of the proposed donation. The Biennale Foundation has been informed that a fee proportionate to the value of the sculpture will be required, as per Park Board donation practice, to assist with the cost of long-term maintenance. Given the composition of the artwork, it is not considered to be a maintenance-intensive form of public sculpture.

The community consultation commenced with site-signage and a brochure detailing the proposal was distributed in a two-block radius around the location. Eighteen responses were received, ten were highly supportive and the remaining responses were generally concerned with intruding on the natural environment or community use of the area. The management of the Watermark Restaurant have also expressed their support for the installation.

With Park Board approval of this donation, installation would begin as soon as possible. The artist has agreed to return to Vancouver to oversee the installation.

SUMMARY

Staff recommend that the Board approve this proposal. The sculpture meets the Board's criteria for "Long Term Gifts of Public Art". Technical and risk-management reviews have been completed to the satisfaction of Park Board's Planning and Operations departments. The Public Art Committee determined the work has artistic value and that the proposed location provides an appropriate context. The majority of community responses were positive. Therefore, based on these results, staff concludes the artwork would be an enhancement to the beach and recommends its acceptance.

Prepared by:
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APPENDIX A

Echoes 2003, at Sunset Beach Location



Proposed Location at Kitsilano Beach

