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Art in Architecture Guidelines

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8.0 Introduction

GSA's Art in Architecture Program commissions artists to create publicly scaled and permanently installed artworks that are appropriate to the diverse uses and architectural vocabularies of new federal buildings and courthouses. This inclusion of contemporary art within the nation's important civic spaces facilitates a meaningful cultural dialogue between the American people and their government, and heralds the contribution of free and creative expression to this country's history.

Through the Art in Architecture Program, GSA is afforded unique opportunities for promoting the holistic integration of art and architecture. This worthy goal is achieved via collaboration among the project artist, architect, landscape architect, engineer, lighting specialist, and practitioners of other disciplines. By focusing the Art in Architecture Program in this manner, GSA provides the American public with federal buildings and courthouses that are not only pleasing and functional, but that also enrich the cultural, social, and commercial resources of the communities where they are located.

The success of each Art in Architecture project depends greatly on the involvement and cooperation of the GSA team, which includes the Regional project manager and contracting officer, the Regional Fine Arts Officer (RFAO), and the Art in Architecture project manager in the Design Excellence and the Arts Division, Office of the Chief Architect. By working closely together, this team can direct the artist commissioning process to a fruitful and rewarding conclusion. Art in Architecture Program and Regional staff have developed the following guidelines in order to aid each GSA team in realizing this goal.

8.1 Funding for Art in Architecture

The funding for each Art in Architecture project is at least 0.5 percent of the building project's total estimated construction cost (ECC). The Regional office in consultation with the Art in Architecture Program staff may increase the art budget if it believes that the

overall project would benefit. One instance when the Region may wish to increase the standard 0.5 percent for art would be for a building project with a very small ECC, but where art is still warranted. Other instances may be where the building will serve a pivotal role in the community's urban landscape, or where local interest in the project's art commission is particularly strong.

The funding of Art in Architecture projects may not be canceled or reduced at anytime without the prior written approval of the Commissioner, Public Buildings Service.

8.2 Use of Art in Architecture Funds

Art in Architecture funds are for artist's expenses, fees, and components of the artwork that cannot or should not be fabricated, constructed, or installed by the general contractor or its subcontractors. Expenses will include the costs of models, drawings, written documentation, insurance, travel, photography, maintenance instructions, and other incidentals.

By the end of the design concept phase of the Art in Architecture project, a decision must be made on whether the artist or the general contractor and subcontractors will be responsible for fabrication and installation of the artwork, and how it will be funded (out of the 0.5 percent Art in Architecture budget, the general construction budget or some combination thereof). In many cases, the Art in Architecture budget will cover the material, fabrication, and installation costs of the artwork. However, the project team is sometimes able to make more economical use of project funds by including portions of this work in the general construction. This is most common when the artwork will be some transformed component of either the building (such as a floor or ceiling) or its site (such as a plaza or landscape element).

Art in Architecture funds must never be used to pay consulting, project management, or any other type of fees to Architect/Engineering (A/E) firms. Congressionally appropriated funds for the building's design phase include Art in Architecture funds (normally 25% of the total Art in Architecture budget). This money is required for the artist's design work, and must not be turned over to the A/E firms.

8.3 Prospectus-Level Repair and Alteration Projects

A prospectus-level repair and alteration project should include an Art in Architecture commission when the GSA project team anticipates that appropriately public spaces for artwork will exist, and that artwork would contribute to the overall enhancement of the building project. For repair and alteration projects involving historic buildings, the RFAO may propose using the Art in Architecture funds to commission qualified artists, artisans or conservators to restore existing art or existing or lost ornamentation and decorative elements. RFAOs will work together with GSA Regional Historic Preservation Officers to determine the most appropriate use for these funds. When appropriate, the Art in Architecture Program staff may consult with a qualified conservator on such projects.

8.4 Involvement of Architect/Engineer

The focus on integrating art into the design of new federal buildings and courthouses is predicated upon the substantial involvement and responsibility of the A/E and a continuous commitment by the GSA team. During the selection of the A/E, the Chief Architect or his designee will explain the goals and objectives of the Art in Architecture Program to the prospective A/E firms. Selecting officials should ascertain the level of experience the firms have had working with artists as members of design teams and the opportunities they envision for integrating art into the project. For major projects using the Design

Excellence Program peer process to select a lead designer and A/E firm, the Regional offices may consider involving a GSA Art Peer as a member of the design peer review.

8.5 Commencing Art in Architecture Projects

Ensuring adequate lead-time for an Art in Architecture project is critical. Accordingly, the Regional project manager must contact both the Regional Fine Arts Officer (RFAO) and the Art in Architecture project manager immediately after a project's A/E firm has been selected (i.e., well prior to contracting the A/E). The project's Art in Architecture component will begin at that time, so that an artist can be selected in time to be afforded the opportunity to collaborate with the A/E firm during design concepts.

The Regional project manager, the RFAO, and the Art in Architecture project manager will meet to discuss initiation of the art commissioning process, the programming of the proposed new building or substantial rehabilitation, the project schedule, and other project matters that may impact the art commission.

By commencing Art in Architecture projects before the A/E firms and Regional project managers are fully consumed with other project demands, GSA can better promote timely, inventive, and successful collaborations between architects and artists.

8.6 Establishing Art in Architecture Panels

Commissioning artists must be accomplished with the advice and consent of a project-specific Art in Architecture Panel consisting of the following members:

- GSA Regional Administrator's designee (often the RFAO)
- Representative of the primary federal client
- Lead A/E designer
- Art Peer from the GSA National Register of Peer Professionals
- Art professional from city, geographic region, or state arts council
- GSA Art in Architecture project manager
- Representative of the community (such as city, state, or Congressional official)

Invitations will be extended to Art in Architecture panelists and their participation will be confirmed well before each building project's A/E is contracted, so that the first panel meeting can be scheduled and convened immediately after award of the A/E contract.

The Art in Architecture project manager and the RFAO will work together in identifying the most suitable panelists for each project. The Art in Architecture project manager will take the lead in identifying competent and dynamic arts professionals, while the RFAO will consult with the Regional project manager in locating the most appropriate representatives of the Regional Administrator, federal client, and community.

These panelists are of critical importance to the success of Art in Architecture commissions. Each member of the panel contributes a distinct and invaluable area of expertise to the project, including knowledge of contemporary art, the needs of the federal client, the design interests of the A/E team, the identity of the community, and the policies of GSA.

The primary functions of Art in Architecture Panels are to review artist applicants, to recommend a small group of finalists for GSA to evaluate, and to review and offer critiques of the selected artist's final design concept.

8.7 Introductory Meeting of the Art in Architecture Panel

The goal of this meeting is to familiarize the panel with the project and to generate ideas about involvement of an artist in the design development.

The Art in Architecture project manager explains the program's objectives by presenting a slide overview of earlier GSA art commissions, discussing the goal of integrating art into the building design and/or its site, and outlining the steps the panel will use to identify the best artist(s) for the project.

The design architects will discuss their architectural design philosophies as exemplified by past building projects since the A/E firm will not have GSA project-specific concepts to show the panel at this very early stage. The design architect may show slides of past projects, including those that included collaboration with artists, and discuss ways the A/E firm can envision working with artists.

The representative of the primary client will be asked to describe the functions and uses of the proposed building, and to share any philosophical viewpoint (e.g., about the mission of the federal agency, or the role of the judiciary) that may impact the artist search and review process. Similarly, the panel's community representatives and arts professionals will be invited to share their thoughts about the identity of the city or region, as well as the existence and vibrancy of a local arts community.

The Regional project manager will describe the project's design milestones and projected construction schedule.

By the end of the introductory meeting, the panel will have decided the preferred method for generating a list of artist candidates. These candidates may be drawn from the GSA National Artists Registry (a database of several thousand contemporary American artists of all career levels, media, and styles), be nominated directly by the panelists, be respondents to a Request for Expression of Interest (RFI), or a combination of these methods.

8.8 Meeting to Review and Recommend Artists

The goal of this second Art in Architecture Panel meeting is to derive a shortlist of artist finalists for GSA to evaluate. This shortlist may be in ranked or non-ranked order, depending upon the preference of the panel. The panel will identify artists whose works are aesthetically and conceptually compatible with—or would provide interesting juxtapositions to—the architectural modes employed by the A/E firm. The panel will review artists’ portfolios (slides and résumés) and discuss the suitability of their work for the project. Discussion of the desirability of an artist’s work for the project should focus on the six evaluation factors used by GSA:

- **Media**—The type of artwork, such as sculpture, painting, or an architectural medium
- **Materials**—Such as bronze, steel, glass, or earthwork
- **Content**—The meaning of visual information conveyed by the artist’s work
- **Style**—Representational, non-representational (i.e., abstract), and/or conceptual
- **Scope**—Level of recognition of the artist’s work by public institutions
- **Experience Level**—Scale, range, complexity, and budget/market value of past work

In addition to the quality of their portfolios and their professional standings in the field of contemporary American art, artists will be selected based upon their ability and willingness to collaborate with the A/E firm. As the artist review process will have commenced prior to the A/E firm’s development of a building concept, determination of each artist’s compatibility will be predicated on a substantive discussion of the A/E firm’s architectural design philosophies and body of recent work.

While the desire of panelists to recommend artists from the city or state where the building will be located may contribute meaningfully to the discussion, GSA’s art program is a nation-wide endeavor, and the overall quality of each candidate’s work (as determined by the six evaluation factors above) will take precedence over geography.

By the end of the artist review meeting, the panel ideally will have derived a shortlist of three to seven finalists. Either the Art in Architecture project manager or the RFAO will notify the finalists of their candidacies. Panelists must maintain the confidentiality of the candidates until GSA officially offers a commission to one or more of the artists.

The panel will also recommend whether or not the finalists should be interviewed prior to GSA's final selection. A sub-committee of the Art in Architecture panel generally conducts these interviews. This committee must include the A/E's lead designer and the Art in Architecture project manager. Depending on the project and their availability, other panel members may also participate. The purpose of finalist interviews is to learn more about each artist's current work, and his or her disposition toward collaborating with the A/E. Panels are strongly discouraged from commissioning the finalists to create competition proposals, as this method consumes valuable project funds and seriously delays the schedule for both the building design and the art commission. Moreover, since the selection occurs early in the design process and the art to be commissioned will be integrated with the architecture, the finalists would be unable to produce a useful design at this stage.

8.9 Evaluating and Approving Artists

The Art in Architecture project manager and the RFAO will conduct a technical evaluation of the artist finalists. This document scores each finalist against the six evaluating factors, and incorporates both the comments of the panelists and the content of any finalist interviews. The RFAO will prepare a memorandum from the Regional Administrator or designee to the Chief Architect recommending approval of the highest scoring artist(s). Meeting minutes, the GSA technical evaluation, and supporting visual materials will accompany this memorandum.

8.10 Contracting Artist(s)

With rare exception, GSA will issue all artists' contracts for Art in Architecture commissions. Regional and Art in Architecture Program staff will develop together the documents necessary to accomplish this task. The Art in Architecture project manager will provide sample contracts as needed. Either the RFAO or the Art in Architecture project manager will be designated as the contracting officer's representative (COR).

An artist's contract will only be held by an A/E firm if the selected artist, the Art in Architecture project manager, Regional staff, and the A/E firm all agree that special circumstances indicate that an A/E-issued contract would contribute significantly to the successful completion of the Art in Architecture project.

Regardless of the contracting method used, the Art in Architecture project manager must review all artists' contracts before they are issued to screen for any clauses that would unduly inhibit the valid interests of GSA, the project artist, or the A/E firm.

During this contracting phase, the RFAO, Art in Architecture project manager, and other appropriate Regional staff will discuss the project with the artist, explaining the artist's role and responsibilities during the project.

8.11 Artist's Site Visit

The GSA team may decide that an initial site visit by the artist to the building project's location is warranted, in order for the artist to meet with representatives of GSA's client agencies, learn about their missions, and develop an understanding of the location's history and identity. Members of the GSA team (the RFAO, the Regional project manager, and the Art in Architecture project manager) must accompany the artist during this visit. The GSA team member will ensure that client and community representatives do not incorrectly assume that the artist will accept direction from them regarding the form,

content, or location of the artwork that the artist has been commissioned to develop. If the GSA team wishes the artist to make this preliminary site visit, the payment schedule of the artist's contract will contain a line item for this purpose.

8.12 Approval of the Artist's Design Concepts

The GSA team will forward the artist's preliminary design concept for review by the Director, Design Excellence and the Arts, in order to assure that the concept adheres to Art in Architecture Program goals and standards. This initial review must occur prior to any review by the Art in Architecture Panel, including the representative(s) of the federal client.

Once the Director, Design Excellence and the Arts, approves the artist's preliminary design concept, the artist develops a final design concept to present to the Art in Architecture Panel. In addition to considering the overall quality of the artist's design concept, the A/E and GSA panelists should encourage fellow panelists to address how the desired uses of the building project's public spaces may be accommodated or supported by the artist's work. The RFAO will incorporate the panel's comments into a memorandum from the Regional Administrator or designee to the Chief Architect seeking approval of the artist's final design concept.

When appropriate, the Design Excellence and the Arts staff may consult with a qualified art conservator about the artist's design concepts to ensure that the proposed materials are stable, durable, non-toxic, environmentally sound, and suitable for their location.

8.13 Artist Participation at the A/E's Final Design Concept Presentation

The artist must attend the A/E firm's final design concept presentation to the Commissioner, Public Buildings Service, in Washington, D.C. Ideally, the project artist will have a preliminary art design concept to present in conjunction with the A/E firm's building concept. If the commission schedule has not permitted the artist time to develop a concept for this presentation, the artist and A/E lead designer will nonetheless be expected to discuss their initial ideas and strategies for collaboration. If the project involves more than one artist, the project artist with the largest budget must be present, and the artist(s) with the smaller budget(s) will attend if possible.

8.14 Fabrication and Installation

Fabrication and installation of all artworks, or artist-designed elements of a building or its site, will be achieved with the close cooperation of the project artist, the A/E firm, and the GSA team—regardless of who assumes primary responsibility for fabrication and installation of the artwork. Each artist's contract will require that the artist and GSA coordinate all activities related to installation of an artwork with the A/E firm and its contractors, in order to avoid any duplication of labor or any removal and reconstruction of building elements impacted by an artwork.

8.15 Acceptance of Art

As will be required by each artist's contract, completion of an Art in Architecture commission will include two, identical sets of photographic documentation of and maintenance instructions for the fully installed artwork. The artist will send one set to the Art in Architecture project manager, and the other set to the RFAO. The photographs of the artwork, which must be properly archived by the central and regional offices, will be used to develop educational materials, and the maintenance instructions will be filed for reference for use during annual art inspections and future conservation needs.

8.16 Cancellation of Commissions

An Art in Architecture commission may be cancelled only with written approval of the Commissioner, Public Buildings Service.

8.17 Public Affairs and Education

The RFAO and the Art in Architecture project manager will work with GSA's public affairs offices to ensure that artworks are introduced to the public via media coverage, public inaugurations or workshops, educational brochures, interpretive plaques, or other adequate means.