



**ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE
DEVELOPMENT
MEMORANDUM**

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ECDM3-23
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TO: MAYOR A. NUTTALL AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

FROM: C. RYAN, PUBLIC ART COORDINATOR

NOTED: S. SCHLICHTER, DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC AND CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT
B. ARANIYASUNDARAN, P.ENG, PMP, GENERAL MANAGER,
INFRASTRUCTURE & GROWTH MANAGEMENT

RE: 2023 PUBLIC ART COMPETITIONS FOR BRIGHTENING BARRIERS
TEMPORARY EXHIBITION AND ARTIST DESIGNED TRAFFIC CABINET WRAPS

DATE: APRIL 19, 2023

This memorandum provides members of Council with an update about the City of Barrie's public art competitions for two annual programs, *Brightening Barriers* temporary exhibition of public art (in its third year) and the Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps, in partnership with Traffic Services (in its second year).

Background

Brightening Barriers is a temporary exhibition of public art that began in 2021. To date, this initiative has been recognized with awards from the International Economic Development Council for Excellence in Neighbourhood Development and an Honourable Mention from the Economic Development Council of Ontario. Originally organized with an aim to relieve the physical separation necessary during the pandemic, this exhibition has evolved to become a celebrated and highly anticipated annual event in downtown Barrie. The initial intention to turn seasonal patio fencing into a collective artistic experience remains its signature feature. Each year the exhibition showcases 6 new artistic projects in partnership with as many downtown business owners. Public programming is offered throughout the duration of the exhibition, including guided and self-guided walking tours and engagement activities for children. This year's exhibition will run May 19 to September 30, 2023.

The Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps are part of the City of Barrie's Graffiti Abatement Program. Wrapping traffic cabinets with artist-designed imagery serves as a graffiti deterrent. The wraps feature original works of art that will contribute to civic pride, bring vibrancy to our City, and highlight the talent in our community. The team in Traffic and Parking Services reached out in late 2021 to develop a pilot program commissioning unique designs to wrap three cabinets. Together, we selected three local artists to create designs that were installed on new traffic cabinets in the Fall of 2022. Following the successful public reception of the first three cabinets, it was decided to commission five more which will be installed in Fall 2023. The wraps have an expected lifespan of up to 10 years.

The success of both of these initiatives is dependent on a public Call to Artists that is disseminated throughout the arts community. *Brightening Barriers* seeks professional artists who work at a highly technical level in a variety of media and are based in the County of Simcoe. The Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps initiative focuses on offering opportunities to local artists based in Barrie who can create artistic designs in a high-resolution digital file format suitable for large-format printing.



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The Calls to Artists and Decision-Making Process

The Calls to Artists were posted to the public and promoted through City and community-based distribution networks. Each call included a detailed description of the project and a list of submission requirements. Efforts were made to encourage variety of artistic voices to submit proposals and accessibility accommodations were offered to applicants.

Brightening Barriers will feature 6 new artistic commissions as in previous years. For 2023, one site was offered to the MacLaren Art Centre's education team. This partnership led to the development of a youth mentorship opportunity where 10 youth (aged 14-18) will be mentored by two professional artists to create a collaborative work of art for the exhibition.

The remaining 5 opportunities were selected through the public competition. The deadline for applications was Monday, March 13th. Fifty-eight applications were received this year, which is a record for any public art project to date. The selection panel identified 5 artists who have been awarded the commissions. The selection process was facilitated by the Public Art Coordinator and the selection panel included two members of the Barrie Public Art Committee, Emily Emond and Laura Kelly, as well as one external stakeholder, Heather Kennedy, Chair, Downtown Barrie BIA.

The Artist Designed Traffic Cabinet Wraps were subject to a similar process. The deadline for applications was Monday, March 20th. Thirty applications were received. The selection panel identified 5 artists who have been awarded the commissions. The selection process was facilitated by the Public Art Coordinator and the selection panel included two members of the Barrie Public Art Committee's Community Projects Team, Tyler Durbano and Katie Green, as well as Steve Rose, Manager of Traffic and Parking Services.

Artists' submissions are assessed on the following criteria: strength of the proposal, quality of proposed artwork, suitability. The panels each came to consensus on the selected artists. The role of the Public Art Coordinator is to provide administrative support and document any questions or comments for selected applicants. Staff are restricted from participation in the decision-making process.

Successful artists are contracted through a formal agreement with the City of Barrie that outlines the conditions of the commission and expectations for the completed artwork.

Selected Artists

Michael Ciesielski
Clandestinos - MacLaren Art Centre
Marne Grahlman
Vivian Heliotis
Ryley James
Ali Jammal
Dawid "LiftiD" Kumidaj & Brad "Sage" MacMillan
Monica Loney
Neil Smith

Brightening Barriers is an annual temporary exhibition that is funded in part by the public art budget and in part through partnership and sponsorship. Local businesses generously partner to lend use of their patio fences for the duration of the exhibition. Sponsorships are financial contributions generously donated by community members who are dedicated to supporting arts initiatives in our community.

Partners & Sponsors

Bohemia
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Flying Monkeys



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Groovy Tuesdays
Jackson's Toyota
Joan Gilroy
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P_zza
Barry Peacock
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Royal Homes
The North

For further inquiries about either public art initiative please contact Carol-Ann Ryan, Public Art Coordinator, at carol-ann.ryan@barrie.ca.