

Newburgh Courthouse Art Project
Artist Selection Jury Report

January 15, 2009

Public Showing, Jurying Event, and Results
of Jurying for the Newburgh Courthouse

On January 8 and 9, the Newburgh Arts and Culture Commission held events that included the public showing and jurying of the art submissions for the Newburgh Courthouse as per the procedures outlined in the Newburgh's Percent for Art Ordinance. Subsequent to public viewing and comments, and as a result of a structured, transparent, and blind selection process (the identity of all artists was withheld from the public and the jurists) by a panel of 11 jurors, an artist was selected to propose to the City Council for approval.

The Request for Proposals for courthouse mural art was issued and widely disseminated in regional press and on-line sites in spring of 2008. The deadline for submissions was October 31, 2009. A total of 39 artist submissions were received.

As per the RFP, arrangements were made to display all submissions for public viewing and the opportunity to make comments to be considered by jurors. Space was donated by Tricia Haggerty Wenz at the Ritz Theater, 111 Broadway. The show was mounted and opened to the public from 5 to 8 pm on Thursday, January 8, 2009 and from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm on Friday, January 9, 2009. Approximately 70 individuals attended the showing on Thursday, and approximately another 30 individuals attended on Friday morning. Comments were left in the log books provided for that purpose.

On Friday afternoon, the jurying was completed. Jurors included;

- Regina Angelo, representing the City Council
- Garin Baker, representing the NACC
- Tomme Berg, Esq., Unified Court System, representing courthouse staff
- Max Hernandez-Calvo, Director of Education, DIA Beacon
- Pamela Krizek, Member of the Commemoration Sub-committee and Spirituality Sub-committee of the Courthouse Burial Grounds Committee
- Victor Mirabelli, artist and Newburgh representative
- Judge B. Harald Ramsey, Newburgh City Court
- Yanyiah Pearson, Director, Human Services, City of Newburgh, city staff representative
- Virginia Walsh, Director, Ann Street Gallery
- Andrew Warren, David Wieboldt Architects, City of Newburgh Courthouse architect
- Kevin White, President and Founder, Performing Arts Academy, Newburgh

Jurors examined submissions for several hours, exchanged thoughts and ideas, and referred to public comments left in log books. Judging was performed using a 3-round, quantitative scaling model. In round one, 20 submissions were eliminated using 1 (competitive) and 0 (not competitive) designations by jurors. The bottom 20 submissions, after adding 11 scores for each submission, were eliminated. In the second round, jurors rated each submission on a scale from 1 (least favored) to 5 (most favored). The ten submissions with the highest mean scores were retained for the final round. In the final round, jurors rated each submission on a scale of from 1 (least favored) to 7 (most favored). In all rounds, submissions are identified by their assigned number only (no names), and jurors are also assigned numbers to protect their confidentiality and independent judgment.

Subsequent to this event, on Wednesday, January 14, 2009, the NACC Percent for Art Committee moved that the NACC accept and move forward on the results of the judging. The NACC passed the motion. The NACC is referring the winner to City Council for approval. Once the City Council approves, the Director of Cultural and Economic Affairs will need to move forward, with the assistance of City Corporate Counsel, to develop a contract with the artist to execute the work and release payment, as appropriate, to the artist. Funds for this project have been established by the comptroller's office in a separate Public Art Fund, as per the Percent for Art Ordinance.

The top-rated artist submission was provided by Bryan Guglielmi. His work is a panorama of Newburgh history, represented in drawings and one painted section. His submission consisted of a complete scaled representation of the courthouse panels. Mr. Guglielmi currently lives in Philadelphia, but he is a Newburgh native, who was raised in Newburgh and went to school in Newburgh. He is a recent graduate of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, which is one of the oldest and finest art schools in the country.

Mr. Guglielmi has been informed that he was the jury and commission first choice, and that City Council action will be needed before we can move forward on either contract discussions or plans for executing the work at the courthouse.