

From: John Kotarski [mailto:kotarskij@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 23, 2014 11:52 AM

To: Miller, Bob; Brown, Connie; Chamberlin, Marsha; Jim Simpson; kt; Kristen Tomey; Nick Zagar; Devon Akmon; Ashlee Arder

Cc: Hupy, Craig; Seagraves, Aaron

Subject: art donation

Good morning Art Commissioners,

I apologize about the lateness getting this to you. I had hoped that I would have a more complete proposal for your review. I have not, but due to the timeliness of the opportunity, I will be presenting it at tonight's meeting.

Several weeks ago an artist friend, Jim Pallas, asked my help placing some of his artwork in Michigan before he moves to Portland, OR to be near his daughter. I recently persuaded Jim to donate several of his pieces to Ann Arbor, if I can find appropriate locations. UM North Campus Research Center (old Pfizer complex) and the Downtown Public Library have selected work and are in the process of making installation arrangements. There are three works that some have thought appropriate for City Hall. I plan to review these with you tonight.

Who is Jim Pallas

Jim is one of David Barr's best friends and a major Michigan artist. He has work in many prominent collections as well as the Detroit Institute of Arts and the UM Museum of Art. Jim also has a piece in US Senator Levin's DC office that responds to debate on the floor of the Senate (see recommendations below and attachments).

Pilot Project

I will explain tonight the process that I used so that it might inform the rewrite to our guidelines as we try to facilitate more donated artwork for the city. We could use this as a pilot project as we consider how to improve the process. The unique aspects to this donation that lend itself to a pilot project are 1) the stature of the artist, 2) his regional roots, 3) the enthusiasm to date of stakeholders, and 4) the message it will send to colleagues of Jim (David Barr and Charles McGee) regarding donations to Ann Arbor.

I had hoped to bring you a donation proposal with proposed locations for artwork which was completely vetted by all stakeholders, however municipal government moves slow and Jim plans to leave the state in four weeks. Hence, the last minute addition to our agenda. I think your knowledge of the process to date and my plans moving forward is appropriate now rather than waiting for a completely vetted proposal.

Why Ann Arbor

Jim often uses a crescent moon as a metaphor for dreams and dreamers. His attraction to situating his moon sculptures in Ann Arbor is because he felt that Ann Arbor was a community where world-class dreamers came to discover new ideas. He intends these sculptures to inspire all of us to take the time to dream bigger dreams.

He feels his LAW piece is better situated at a local courthouse because it represents a monument to the living law. Additionally it has artifacts of the practice of Michigan law and his daughter graduated from UM Law School. Jim feels Ann Arbor is perfect for the artwork.

Plus, the electronic images that are displayed can be expanded by local students in order to allow the artwork to represent current images connected to the practice of the law.

Vetting to Date

I have kept Craig and Bob in the loop as I met with Susan Pollay, Jim Curtis, Colin Smith, and Ken Clein. My plan is to review safety, maintenance, and traffic flow with appropriate Justice Center and City Hall staff to insure all stakeholders are in acceptance of the artwork in the proposed locations. Jim's daughter, Lydia Loren, is a law professor and international scholar in intellectual property rights who happens to have worked closely with our City Attorney, Steve Postema. Lydia and Mr. Postema have made arrangement to resolve any legal issues necessary to facilitate this donation.

Artwork Images

[Fallen Moon](#)

[Luna Maggiorie](#)

[LAW](#)

Professional References

Professor Kirkpatrick is an internationally respected scholar of the history of art who has followed Jim's professional career for some time.

Ms. Wilkinson is a nationally respected curator of modern art and has know Jim and respected his work for many years. The Detroit Institute of Arts and the University of Michigan Museum of Art have Pallas' artwork because Jim Pallas is an important part of the history of modern art.

David Barr is a Michigan artist who's work is known internationally. David was also an art school classmate and shared an office with Jim for 37 years while they both taught art at Macomb Community College. David is a prolific writer and founder of Legacy Art Park at Chrystal Mountain. The excerpts below are from David's recent book Sieve (2011). David has dedicated his latest book, yet to be published, to Jim Pallas. In the dedication, David identifies Jim as his longest living friend."...there was no better artistic comrade than Jim Pallas. He sustained me with his resilient spirit, bubbling creativity, primal audacity, intellectual curiosity and outrageous humor."

Senator Levin and his wife Barbara are personal friends of Jim and collectors of his work.

Hi John,

I wholeheartedly support the idea of installing Jim Pallas's work in Ann Arbor's public spaces. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity. It would be truly wonderful to have the positive energy flowing out from such an array of Jim Pallas's wonderful works.

I can attest to this because I have followed his work with interest for several decades now, and he was part of my courses when I taught contemporary art. His combination of intelligence, wit, and intriguing design never failed to stimulate students to a new appreciation of how art could be an exciting interactive part of a public space.

Jim is a Michigan treasure. I have a long-standing true appreciation for Jim's amazing talents and for the effects of his works on those who encounter them. Many of Jim's work is electronic but his Moon series is equally special. Hauntingly beautiful, among other things.

Feel free to contact me if you need anything else.

Sincerely,
Diane Kirkpatrick

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Dear John,

I am thrilled to think that Jim Pallas's wonderful works might find a home in Ann Arbor. I have known Jim and his work for more than 30 years, when I joined the staff at the Detroit Institute of Arts as a young curator. I bought an important early electronic work for the DIA collection, featured his work in exhibitions, and collect his work personally. Few in the area know how innovative and important Jim's work is; he is one of the first artists to work electronically. In addition, his approach to sculpture always figures in the viewer; this emphasis on interactivity -- so prevalent now -- was foremost in his thinking as early as the 1960s. His art is witty, warm, always surprising, effortlessly intellectual, and never pretentious. Fortunately for us, much of his prodigious output has centered on public art, always carefully sited to make viewers think and smile. We are so lucky to have this talented artist in our midst.

Sincerely,

MaryAnn Wilkinson
Adjunct Curator of Modern Art, University of Michigan Museum of Art
Former Curator of Modern Art, Detroit Institute of Arts
Exhibition Director, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan

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exerts from Sieve (2010) by David Barr, artist/writer

Jim is a sculptor, but his body of work could never be reduced to that inadequate designation. He draws confident, flowing lines with a grace I can only envy, but could never achieve. Many of his welded wire sculpture carry that deceptively effortless, fluent line into elegant webs of sculpted space.

...[He] is the first artist I know to intuit the artistic possibility of the electronic revolution and to harvest the fruits of the computer.

Jim has always resisted being categorized within an art movement. A better reference to locate Jim's inspirations may be in music...in his

artworks his playful spirit leaves a trail hinting at visual carnage (like a John Coltrane riff) but one healed by his unique aesthetics. It is only upon a viewers' concentrated attention that the art releases its innermost inventiveness and satiric wit.

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Dear John,

Jim is a friend and I consider him a national treasure. My wife Barbara and I have purchased a number of his works, beginning with a print of his when he was still an art student, and including his first interactive sculpture that he built to respond to Barbara's harpsichord.

I also have one of Jim's pieces in my Washington D.C. Office titled "The Senate Piece". Many visitors to my office have loved watching it. It responds, among other things, to the sound of the debate on the Senate floor.

Jim's vision and playful creativity show in the art he creates. I'm not an art critic, but I believe others would enjoy Jim's work as much as we have.

Sincerely,
Carl Levin