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City of Kelowna

**MEMORANDUM**

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**DATE:** October 20, 2004  
**FILE:** 7800  
**TO:** City Manager  
**FROM:** Manager, Cultural Services Division  
**RE:** Public Art Project – City of Kelowna 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**REPORT PREPARED BY: LORNA GUNN, MANAGER, CULTURAL  
SERVICES DIVISION**

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** City Council approve the recommendation of the Public Art Committee to award to the Alternator Gallery for Contemporary Art of Kelowna the commission for the production and screening of, and accompanying catalogue/DVD for, '*Temporal Transmissions*', a series of seven short videos commemorating Kelowna's Centenary.

**AND THAT** the Mayor and Clerk be authorized to sign a contract with the Alternator Gallery for Contemporary Art for an amount not to exceed \$25,000 (funded from the Public Art Reserve) for the production of the work and catalogue/DVD and screenings between the months of May and October, 2005.

**BACKGROUND:**

The City of Kelowna Public Art Committee held a competition in the summer of 2004 seeking proposals for a temporary work of art highlighting Kelowna's centennial celebrations. The intent of the competition was to solicit video, performance art, site specific installations, multi-media work, prints or other temporary works which could be exhibited on City-owned sites for a period of approximately six months between May and October, 2005. The competition followed the standard Public Art Committee proposal process, and was an open and unrestricted call for submissions.

Six submissions were received. Two submissions (video and sculpture) were received from Kelowna artists and four (light installation, mosaic, site specific installation and sculpture) from artists residing elsewhere in BC. By a majority of votes, the Public Art Committee agreed that the Alternator Gallery's video project '*Temporal Transmissions*' would be recommended to Council.

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Evaluation criteria (from the brief) were:

- i) the submission includes all elements required in section (c) of this brief (Artist's statement, resume, budget, drawings etc.) and complies with the specifications required by this competition;
- ii) creative merit of the proposed artwork, both conceptually and visually;
- iii) ability of the artwork to engage the public imagination;
- iv) a meaningful relationship between the artwork and the site, in other words, the artwork relates to the streetscape design;
- v) appropriate scale and material composition of the artwork relative to the site;
- vi) permanence of the artwork, including structural and surface integrity, ability to withstand damage and avoid vandalism, endurance in a public environment, and ease of maintenance and repair;
- vii) suitability of the artwork to a public venue, including theme, content and safety of design;
- viii) suitability of the artist to the project, including quality of previous work, demonstrated ability of the artist to meet project schedules and budget, professionalism, and ability to interpret the project as outlined in the Competition Brief;
- ix) feasibility of the project budget.

A one page summary of the Public Art Committee's mandate and selection process is also provided with this memo (on the last page) as additional background information.

### **General Description of the project:**

*'Temporal Transmissions'* is a series of 7 short video works, compiled on a DVD and accompanied by a printed catalogue which will include an essay about the project and information about the artists. The works will be produced, using the facilities of the Alternator Gallery's Media Arts Centre, by two senior Canadian video artists (Jayce Salloum and Dana Claxton: see information below), and five emerging video artists from the Kelowna area.

Jayce Salloum and Dana Claxton will each create a video for the project, and will also serve as mentoring voices, providing inspiration and critical feedback to the five emerging video artists. These five emerging artists will be selected through a call for submissions circulated in the local community. The Public Art Committee will, with the Gallery's selection committee, participate in the review and selection of the emerging artists, using the following criteria:

- Experience with video production
- The quality of previous and proposed work
- Compatibility of their proposed work with the intent of the Public Art project and the Alternator's mandate to promote innovative contemporary art.

The Public Art Committee will also participate, with the Gallery's representatives, in a review of the video works prior to the final editing process. This is assist in ensuring that the content and format meet the criteria of the competition brief.

Copies of the DVD and catalogue will be provided to the city, local schools, galleries, museums and other institutions as a permanent legacy of the city's centennial.

Screenings of the video works can be conducted outdoors or indoors, in any location which has a power source and a suitable projection surface. Screenings can also be incorporated into festivals, celebrations and other special events. This provides a great deal of flexibility in introducing the works to the widest possible audience.

The selection process for emerging artists will commence immediately upon approval by Council, with production work to commence in early December, 2004, editing and DVD production in April, 2005, and an official launch screening in the first half of May, 2005. The catalogue will be available shortly thereafter.

The Alternator Gallery's Exhibitor Coordinator, David Ross, will provide extensive technical support to the project participants, maintaining equipment, assisting with editing and technical problems, organizing the DVD and catalogue production as well as ensuring that production schedules for the project are met.

### **General Description of the project content: (as known to date): From Jayce Salloum:**

I intend to focus on histories and settlement of the Kelowna area through the accounts of local inhabitants and correlating sites of social and historical significance.

I am planning for this videotape to centre on two main subject areas, the familial and the First Nations. My family will serve as the improbable *archetypal* figure(s) of immigration to the valley. This will include a personal exploration of my past (and my siblings') growing up in Kelowna during the 60's and 70's as well as reflections about my grandparents' immigration to Kelowna from Saskatchewan (1945) and preceding that, from Lebanon (in 1900's). With pre-production research I will try to locate First Nations' elders and other members of local First Nation communities who would be willing to articulate their histories on tape and speak from their positions about the present context of their lives.

The videotape will also be peppered with peripheral visitations of people encountered along the way. Scratching past the surface, digging into our (not unproblematic) relationship with the complexities of the past, our presence here, and that of the original inhabitants of this place we call Kelowna, I hope that we might be able to approach how one comes close to the recognizing the terms of our histories and viewing them with an alternate vision.

### **From Dana Claxton:**

My artistic intent is to locate archival footage of Kelowna that exhibits celebratory themes and images. I will re-edit the footage and make a short work that reflects different stages of celebration in Kelowna's history. As within my video practice, I will critically situate this history within layered meanings of cultural production, the image and the human experience. The critical intent of the work is to see how we celebrate our identities within the landscape and municipal setting and locate a sense of self in doing so.

### **General background about New Media/Video Work:**

Video art emerged some 40 years ago due to technological innovations that created portable and relatively inexpensive video equipment, in particular the Sony Portapak. Such equipment freed artists to experiment without relying on the financial returns from commercial productions. The art form has continued to grow in popularity, particularly with younger artists, moving from brief shows on tiny screens in alternative galleries to domination in international exhibitions and arts festivals.

An important theoretical influence for early video makers was the work of the Canadian academic Marshall McLuhan. In his book, *Understanding Media*, McLuhan drew attention to the degree to which television was an invasive agent for cultural change. At first, artists used video as a means to critique television culture and news media. Now, after further technological

advances, video artists creatively use digital processes of editing to extend, repeat, speed up and digitally enhance images. Video art often combines influences from other disciplines and from art history movements such as abstraction, conceptual art, minimal art, performance art, pop art and photography. This allows video art to be a hybrid medium with unlimited theoretical and visual approaches.

Video is a contemporary, complex and diverse medium yet it is accessible through our familiar relationship to films, documentaries and music videos. Interestingly, many of these genres use stylistic innovations pioneered by video artists. Canadian artists such as Jayce Salloum, Stan Douglas and Rodney Graham, all based in Vancouver, are considered international leaders in the field of video. Major Canadian institutions including the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto and the Vancouver Art Gallery have hosted major video exhibitions in recent years.

As an example of other jurisdictions incorporating new media work into their public art collections, the City of Vancouver is currently seeking applications from artists or artist teams working with electronic media and/or multimedia for a major commission at the Mount Pleasant Civic Centre. The total artwork budget is \$180,000 and the deadline for submissions is Nov, 16, 2004. Visit [www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/artatkingsway](http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/artatkingsway) for information.

This will be the first new media/video work to be included in the City of Kelowna's public art collection.

### **About the artists:**

**Jayce Salloum** has been working in installation, photography, video, mixed media, text, and performance since 1977, as well as curating exhibitions, conducting workshops and coordinating cultural projects. He spent most of his childhood in Kelowna, and after 22 years living and working in San Francisco, Banff, Toronto, San Diego, Beirut and New York, he now lives/works out of Vancouver. A media arts philosopher and cultural activist, Salloum has lectured internationally and exhibited extensively throughout the Americas and Europe, in East Asia and the Middle East, at institutions including The Museum of Modern Art, National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography; Canadian Museum of Civilization, Los Angeles Center for Photographic Studies, Contemporary Art Gallery (Vancouver), Cinematheque Française, Rotterdam International Film Festival, Singapore International Film Festival and the British Film Institute. His texts have appeared in many catalogues, and journals such as Documents, Framework, Fuse, Felix, Public, Pubic Culture, and Semiotext(e). In 2003 he represented Canada at the 8th Havana Biennial.

**Dana Claxton** is a Vancouver-based film, video and performance artist whose work has been screened internationally in more than 15 countries. Claxton was born in Saskatchewan of Lakota Sioux descent. She incorporates elements of visual art with traditional Lakota knowledge in work that often relates to her concerns with the environment and cultural preservation. She is interested in breaking stereotypes and facilitating new narratives which enhance our ability to relate to each other and a sacred, natural world. Claxton's work has been featured in exhibitions at the Walter Philips Gallery at the Banff Centre, the Museum of Modern Art in New York and is included in the permanent collections of the Vancouver Art Gallery and the Winnipeg Art Gallery. She has directed projects for the National Film Board of Canada, the CBC, VTV, APTN, the Canadian Labour Congress and the Province of British Columbia, and teaches First Nations art history at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design in Vancouver. She has guest lectured at Canadian universities in various departments, participated as a jury member for federal and provincial arts funding bodies and has mentored aboriginal youth in media art and video production.

### **About the Alternator Gallery for Contemporary Art:**

The Alternator Gallery for Contemporary Art is an artist-run centre operated by the Okanagan Artists Alternative, a registered non-profit society and charitable organization. It is governed by an elected board of directors composed of professional artists, college professors, cultural workers and student representatives. The Gallery has been in continuous operation since 1988 and was the Okanagan's first artist-run centre. The Gallery's mandate is to present exhibitions by Canadian and international artists to challenge and inspire local artists and to enrich the cultural life of the Okanagan. The gallery also programs experimental and innovative work by local artists, with particular emphasis on emerging artists, aboriginal artists and artists from culturally diverse communities. The gallery's annual artist-in-residency program provides visiting artists with opportunities to research and produce new work and interact with the local community through studio tours, workshops and artist talks. The gallery also offers access to digital video production equipment through its media arts centre (see below).

The Gallery maintains a permanent exhibition space in Kelowna's Rotary Centre for the Arts, and also occupies (within the same building) Studio 111, which is used as a Media Arts Centre (MAC). The MAC was established in September 2002 and provides the region's only access to video production equipment for emerging artists. It is fully equipped with cameras, lighting, projector and editing suite. Stephen Foster, a senior video artist and fine arts professor at Okanagan University College, is a member of the Alternator's Board of Directors and is active in the provision of technical support and the development of the media centre's overall strategic vision.

Since its inception 2 years ago, the Alternator Gallery Media Arts Centre has administered two successful projects funded by the Canada Council involving a total of 19 artists and 14 independent productions. These works have been extensively screened in the Kelowna area and elsewhere.

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**Lorna Gunn**  
**Cultural Services Division Manager**

***Approved for inclusion***

David Graham  
Director of Parks and Leisure Services

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### **CITY OF KELOWNA PUBLIC ART COMMITTEE SELECTION PROCESS**

The Public Art Committee consists of 9 individual Kelowna residents. They are appointed by resolution of City Council. The appointments are based on the applicant's knowledge of, and genuine interest in art, art practices and civic enhancement. All committee members serve as volunteers.

Current members of the Public Art Committee are:

Don McIntosh (Chairperson)  
Judy Burns (Vice-Chairperson)  
Paul Skutshek  
Larry Foster  
Gordon Hartley  
Dona Moore  
Peter Werner  
Susan Belton  
Barbara Rhodes

The Committee is mandated (in part) by its Terms of Reference to determine suitable public areas and buildings for public art installations, conduct competitions for the commissioning of public art works, and make recommendations to Council regarding the awarding of a public art commission. In all instances, the final decision regarding any public art commission rests with Council.

Consultations with the public, other interested parties, and with City staff from various departments such as Civic Properties and Parks are frequently a part of the Committee's considerations.

The public art competition process can be summarized as follows:

1. The committee defines the project and determines the budget.
2. A competition brief is prepared and reviewed by staff and the Committee.
3. The competition is advertised and included in the City's normal tendering process.
4. Submissions meeting applicable criteria are reviewed by the committee and, if relevant, by other City staff and interested parties.
5. A shortlist of submissions is prepared.
6. Shortlisted artists are invited to provide further information as needed and/or prepare maquettes (scale models) of their work.
7. The maquettes are reviewed and a final selection is made.
8. A report summarizing the Committee's recommended selection is presented to Council.
9. Upon Council approval, a contract is prepared between the City and the artist including provision for payment, progress timelines and other legal considerations.
10. Cultural Services staff monitor completion of the project and ensure that proper photo documentation of the installation process is completed.
11. Upon completion, Cultural Services staff work with the Mayor's office staff to plan for a public dedication ceremony.

A typical competition process will require 6 months' time between preparation of the brief and signing of the contract. Generally another 3-4 months is then required for completion and installation of the work. Larger, more complex projects will require more time for completion.