

Session Name: Indigenous Artists in Public Art

Date: Nov. 6, 2018

Notes

Topic	Key themes or ideas shared, questions & discussion
Indigenous Artists in Public Art	<p>Should be doing – not because we have to</p> <p>Have you worked with indigenous artists?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very different from how we usually work; artist approached the city; decided to place them temporarily, used them as programming but the community didn't want them to leave; had protests; Council was not sure what to do; tremendous community support; had to work backwards towards an agreement to make it permanent; were able to maintain flexibility; was a very informal process; a piece broke off, there was a ceremony to have it fixed; • Same artist did programming at a kids event; the artist helped to facilitate demonstrations in granite and soapstone; • There were processes that she didn't understand but she learned; they were developing a friendship – not a formal process agreement; different way of working; had to establish a friendship, a relationship • Very unusual, didn't go through the procurement process; direct award; designated funding from council which grew from the community's desire to keep the pieces in place permanently • Not coming to people with an idea but asking them to have a conversation or an opportunity • The consulting piece is the difficult piece – finding the right person to have the conversation; trying to find a community member to assist with the consultation piece • Consensus that this is what we want to do, not because we have to do it but because it is the right thing to do. • Ajax has 56% racialized community; largest population is South Asian and black; indigenous population is less than 1000 people. 4 indigenous groups in the community • Hard to find these 4 groups; only know from census data • A lot based in Toronto but don't know how far east they serve <p>Huntsville:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No first nations communities; fall under more recent treaties; were open for settlement fairly recently; when indigenous communities

were resettled there are good records for where they went. They have good relationships with indigenous peoples because they have developed the relationships for many many years.

- Have been able to co-produce pow-wows and incorporate indigenous aspects into events
- Issue now is that elders are passing away; new relationships have to begin;
- Go to their powwows, go to their events, this is how relationships happen

Performance based artists – not visual art based

Metis band have worked with Ajax to provide indigenous performers; they have often cancelled at the last minute for reasons of appropriateness; have to be able to develop trust

Have to go to events- don't go to the community just because you want something

St. Albert

- Her experience has been that there is a desire to become part of the entire event; part of the planning; relax our view of the presentation style; we have this time allocated – we are ok if we may need to change the order; and this needs to happen to develop the relationship
- There is a lack of knowledge and a fear of offending; learning more about this population; learning that it's okay to not know; and learn

National Aboriginal Day Celebration?

Only 3 communities at the table;

Are they run by gov't?

Ajax – yes. Once had a strong artist who helped to run it but no longer.

Difficult – this is a holiday for the indigenous community – why would they work on this holiday?

Culture Days – did sensitivity podcast; talks about the language, how to approach someone, talks about appropriateness; fake consultation vs real

consultation.

Don't have to know it but it's not always up to you to know it – recognize that you don't know it and find out.

C150 – “ like celebrating the death of my people”

Indigenous person was the first person to speak at events;

If you are going ahead with good intentions, it's a very fine line

Indigenous Art Project in Edmonton – did you alter your process? how open are you to change your process?

Could work with an indigenous consultant.

How do you ask for credentials? Not in writing or a submission, but in a conversation; because you are developing a relationship

We did change our process. Brought artists from across Canada and hired a consultant to be the curator. Certain city processes had been determined – the site had been chosen the budget had been determined; there is a process of how to move through a project; put together a steering committee of elders and local representation, indigenous artists and the project team. we thought it would go smoothly in a linear fashion; it didn't work that way; there was a lot of talking and teaching and moving back and forth; they wanted to meet with the shortlisted artists to be able to tell them the story. They were able to perform the story for the shortlisted artists as a second information session for the artists. Start bringing the community that will be impacted into the conversation at the very beginning of the process. But we don't always have 4 years to talk.

The next project had to move on much shorter timelines; there were errors made and were very public – had to go back and put more effort and energy into engaging the community in a more meaningful way; artists complained they didn't like how they were being treated – “your contract is due on XX” would be a terrible way to manage agreements; it is an offensive way to work; this needed to be resolved. How to make sure the inclusion is there at the beginning.

It would have been nice to have indigenous artists here – would like to hear of their experiences with colonial processes and the barriers they impose.

This way of learning and unlearning is profound in life.

Coming in with good intentions is important.

Had a final pipe ceremony to bring everyone back together even after the space had been opened.

Why don't we listen and adjust our processes with every project? Many communities operate outside the procurement policy;

Big mistake to lump "indigenous" together as one group.

Session Name: Indigenous Artists in Public Art Facilitated by Kevin, City of Saskatoon
Date: November 6, 2018 at 1:30 pm

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Topic	Key themes or ideas shared, questions & discussion
	<p>What are your experiences when it comes to indigenous art practices and representation of indigenous peoples in municipal public practice?</p> <p>Kevin – City of Saskatoon Caroline–City of Kitchener Danica – City of Kingston Laura – Town of New Market Maria – Town of Whitby Sarah – President of OCAD/Chair of Nuit Blanche Katie – Guelph Arts Council Janice – Town of New Market</p> <p>Table Representation: mix of cultural practitioners with vast experience and others exploring this topic, topics of access and reconciliation was discussed</p> <p>OCAD has 12 indigenous faculties, Nuit Blanche working with Indigenous Cultural Practitioners to shift policy</p> <p>Saskatoon – worked with indigenous artists on last 6 public art pieces, focussing on reconciliation, working on city policy to open up the City as a platform for greater diversity. Connecting with indigenous communities / elders</p> <p>What strategies of policies or processes does your City have or should have?</p>

PA Policy specific reference to First Nations/Metis culture?

Procurement/Commissioning?

Jurying/Decision Making ?

OCAD – how difficult it is to have community representation on juries. The process requires more engagement, decision making, and control between community, curator and artist.

Returning to community governing best of indigenous practices.

Jury must be representative of Indigenous community.

In public framework, some work can be best produced, reproduced in indigenous communities, on reserves. Opportunity to have multi-sites.

Important to incorporate indigenous communities.

Nuit Blanche- Indigenous community felt Nuite Blanche had sustainable practices, immense amount of garbage. Think critically around commissioning around sustainability and relationship with the earth.

Work with indigenous curators – experienced practitioners balance western views and indigenous ideals.

Indigenous artists/curators talk of racism/barriers and requires city to protect them from processes.

Identifying public art as indigenous by western terms, or by indigenous communities.

Barrier/layer of complexity with respect to idea of territory or place. Indigenous communities are diverse. Indigenous communities need support to put mechanisms in place to get approval for artists to install art in another nations land.

Have indigenous staff person involved in processes.

Process and timeline needs to expand as process of engaging indigenous community.

Public Art Advisory in Saskatoon is planning to have FN and Metis representation. Prior to this divergence from the policy to bring in indigenous representation.

Engagement needs to be intentional.

New Market-Consulted with Indigenous elders to get their feedback and engagement on project and their input was acted upon.

Working with the community was is in it's infancy, and involves a lot of back and forth

Where do we go from here?

Kitchener – Building it’s process. Not arts and culture unit, City Policy. Public Arts working Group, need to connect with Indigenous Arts Group.

Faculty from universities may be a resource for connecting to that community.

Creating sustainability by reaching out to broader group so as not to overwhelm indigenous community that participates.

Creating funding for indigenous artists to allow opportunities as historically they have not been strongly represented in public art.

Montreal – Pre-vetted artists that are selected and added to a roster to create a diverse pool of artists to pull from.

Public Art Program- if it can be considered art inside as opposed to outdoor.
Defining art/Public Art.

Procurement Policy, Hiring Policy, Public Art Policy, Equity and Inclusion Policies, all policies need to be broader to ensure that indigenous relations are handled in the right way.
Operational values need to be city wide.

Public Art Piece in Saskatoon highlighting Cree Language, important as it was an anti-racism tool. The neon light installation, Cree community felt represented in the Public Realm.
Procurement worked with Public art to ensure TRC Residential School RFP had indigenous representation. Jury was comprised of Public Art Advisory, City Staff, Community Rep, Indigenous Elders

Procurement can be a barrier, particularly with cultural sensibilities.
Better education is important, working across silos, having gatherings to share ideas.

It is very important for indigenous communities to see youth involvement in projects.
Involved works on reserves, in schools, and focussing on youth to create knowledge exchange.

Before reconciliation, truth needs to be revealed. It will take time to reconcile and there are learnings with listening, and allowing their voice to be heard.

Look to New Zealand who have been handling indigenous relations and reconciliation longer.
Many learnings, in terms of land acknowledgements, and how they approach it.
Australia’s museum practice is innovative, however, Australian Policy is not as progressive.

They have complex rights issues and only in past 10 years addressed a broader sense of identity.

Complex relations between first generation immigrants, indigenous communities, conflict laden space. New immigrants don't feel it's their responsibility. How to work with indigenous practice, sense of location, engagement with community and those things can translate into working with other communities, but how to take that into other areas. How to get public art in a broader sense of community.

Scarborough has large new immigrant and indigenous community. They have developed a sense of community, repatriating artists. Nuit Blanche has done interesting work in this area.

Indigenous piece in Saskatoon in front of land titles building about stealing land and taking it back.

Cultural Competency Training at the City of Mississauga for Culture Staff and Affiliate's.
