

ABBOTSFORD Gets the Raspberry

By Tamaka Fisher

On February 7, 2011 Abbotsford City Council approved a new public art policy for the City.

“The inclusion of a public art program has been shown to increase civic pride, promote multiculturalism and inclusiveness, create public dialogue and beautify the public realm,” said City Manager, Frank Pizzuto. Public art was also identified by the Mayor’s Task Force on Crime Reduction as an important tool in Abbotsford’s Crime Reduction and Community Safety Strategy.

Civic funding for the program allows for one percent of new capital facilities budgets to be allocated to public art for those projects, with a \$300,000 cap per project. Public art is also a consideration in Abbotsford’s Economic Development & Planning Services Department’s Urban Design Principles for new developments. “Public art should be employed to enhance local areas, and/or act as ‘gateways’ into specific neighbourhoods.”

The private sector components of the program are voluntary and the City hopes to work closely with developers to create public art opportunities for their projects. A public art reserve fund has been established for private donations and the first contribution, from a local developer, has been received.

The first two public artworks installed in the City after the policy was approved are located on traffic roundabouts visible to Highway 1. The first work installed at the McCallum south roundabout was designed by Raphael Silver, a member of the local Sumas First Nation, and an emerging artist



with a diverse practice. The piece, untitled, represents the life cycle of the salmon.

“It is a symbol of the Sto:lo people’s reverence of this beautiful animal which has come to mean so much to them, and homage to mother nature to show thanks and appreciation for such a generous gift,” says the artist.

The second artwork located at the Clearbrook south roundabout at Hwy 1, also untitled, was designed by local emerging artist and history enthusiast, Manjit Sandhu. It celebrates the agricultural heritage of the City and Abbotsford’s long held title of Raspberry Capital of Canada.

Abbotsford resident Stephen Evans writes in a letter to the editor of the Abbotsford News, “We are the berry capital of Canada and we should be proud of it. Now that makes all the wait, dust, and traffic while that section of our community undergoes a tremendous amount of change, worth it!”

“Public art is an important tool in defining and creating a unique sense of place for a City,” said former Mayor of Abbotsford, George Peary. “As Abbotsford continues to



Images courtesy of Tamaka Fisher.

Clockwise from left to right.

Raspberry, “Untitled” by Manjit Sandhu.

Section of salmon sculpture, “Untitled” by Raphael Silver.

Section of University of Fraser Valley sculpture, “Untitled” by Bain, Tiana J. Bain, Deborah M. Coughlin, Katelynn B. Denny, Melinda M. Enns, Kate L. Feltren, Courtney G. Harrod, Carol Kondle, Candice A. Kruger, Lauralee J. Lamarche, Jessica R. Macbeth, Chelsi M. Markstein, Janie M. Nadeau, Jason A. Peters, Jeffrey Rasmussen, Shannon A. Thieson, and Alicia Williams.

grow, it is extremely important that we create opportunities for people that come to our City to understand and explore our heritage and our culture.”

Since 2010 the City has also partnered with the University of the Fraser Valley on the Community Arts Practice class led by instructor Christopher Friesen. Students ►

learn first-hand the process a public artist goes through from the beginning stages through to completion and installation. It has been a great opportunity to foster the development of emerging artists and support the University, but by far, the greatest benefit is received by the City. Beautiful, thoughtful, and inspired works of art activate our public places and in addition, new relationships with the local arts community have been fostered.

In June 2011, the City hosted a public art forum to inform and dialogue with the general public about the role of public art in cities and the role of artists in society. Invited to speak were Cath Brunner, Director of

Public Art 4Culture and manager of public art projects in King County, WA and Buster Simpson, a well-known, award-winning public artist who has taught in universities across the United States. Brunner was also invited to give a staff presentation about public art and infrastructure projects. Educating and collaborating with staff will continue to be an important piece of the program.

For all cities starting up a new public art program, there is a period of adjustment and some growing pains. Abbotsford is no exception. But the social and economic benefits are solid. It is estimated by the City that for every dollar spent on culture, \$1.68 is

returned to Abbotsford in direct and spin of revenue. Abbotsford is courting the cultural tourists, as they represent the sector that will stay longer and spend more in the City.

There are currently two more City-funded public art projects underway. The first is by the artist team of Kilvert and Kilvert, and will be integrated into the structure of the new Fire Hall #8, due to be completed in early 2012. The second is an outdoor sculpture by artist Bruce Voyce for the new Abbotsford Collegiate School library due to be completed in September 2012. [SL](#)

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PUBLIC ART in My Prince George

PROFESSIONAL, PARTICIPATORY, AND PRESENTS

By Doug Hofstede, Recreation Coordinator – Arts and Culture

The Prince George experience in public art can be classified into three categories: professional, participatory, and presents (gifts).

Prince George's professional public art is mainly permanent installations consisting of pieces like statues, sculptures, and tile mosaics. These are often the pieces that the average person perceives as public art. These pieces are commissioned through an RFP process and are often the type of pieces that are incorporated into new projects. In Prince George it is the responsibility of the City's Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) to guide this process, while championing artist

involvement and participation in the community's public spaces and built environment. Since the City's Public Art Program is relatively new, many of the existing artworks have been placed onto landscapes where public art was not considered in advance. Placement and incorporation into these existing sites can offer a challenge.

Participatory public art are pieces that are either heavily influenced by the public but more often created by the public. Many minds and hands have participated in the creation of this art. It should be noted that the participatory art does not preclude professional artists from being involved. They are often key to the success. In Prince George the PAAC has found that the participatory public art has often been developed as tem-



Images courtesy of City of Prince George.

Participatory Public Art – painted trash receptacle.

porary artwork, like community designed banners or painted trash receptacles. For instance, groups like Girl Guides, preschools, and high school art classes have been given opportunities to create their own work on these receptacles that are scattered throughout the City's parks and green spaces. The only guidance provided was that the artwork needed to portray a positive community image with no corporate logos and minimal