



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: November 21, 2006
Author: Cherryl Masters
Phone No.: 604.871.6498
RTS No.: 6185
VanRIMS No.: 05-5000-10
Meeting Date: December 12, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: Assistant Director, Office of Cultural Affairs
SUBJECT: 2006 Pilot Commissioning Grants Program

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve the reallocation of funds remaining in the 2006 Theatre Rentals Project Grants component of the 2006 Cultural Services budget, \$4,160, to the 2006 Pilot Commissioning Program component of the Cultural Grants budget.
- B. THAT Council approve six Pilot Commissioning Grants totalling \$119,160, as listed in Table 1, source of funds to be the Commissioning component of the Cultural Grants budget.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

On July 13, 2006, Council approved new funding allocations to a number of grant programs including up to \$115,000 to a pilot Commissioning Program, to assist cultural organizations in the creation and development of new work by professional artists.

Approval of grants requires eight affirmative votes.

PURPOSE

This report presents recommendations for the award of six Commissioning Grants in response to the first application to the 2006 pilot Commissioning Program.

BACKGROUND

The pilot Commissioning Program was developed in response to feedback from the community and from the Creative City Task Force subcommittee which reviewed and made a recommendation for the investment of the increase to the Cultural Budget in 2006. The need for a fund to support “cultural R&D” was identified - funds that would enable arts organizations to initiate and develop new work of a significant scale which will profile Vancouver’s artistic strengths to a local, national and international audience.

Based on that consultation, in July 2006 Council approved a pilot Commissioning Program with a mandate to assist Vancouver arts and cultural organizations in commissioning original artwork by professional artists by supporting the creation, development and production costs of new work in the disciplines of theatre, dance, music, literary, visual and media arts.

Eligible applicants are professional Vancouver-based, non-profit arts and cultural organizations engaged in creation, production, presentation and dissemination activities related to the performing, visual & media, and literary arts. Eligible artists to be commissioned are professional artists (have received basic training in their field, have peer recognition, actively practise their art form and seek compensation for it, and have a history of public presentation of their work), who may or may not be based in Vancouver. Organizations must also meet a number of additional criteria which are detailed in the pilot Commissioning Program Information in Appendix A.

In relation to other existing Cultural Services programs, the pilot Commissioning Program is intended to contribute investments to initiatives that would be outside the scope of what organizations normally undertake. It is to provide additional assistance to allow organizations the time and resources necessary to develop a work to its highest artistic calibre. The minimum request is \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$50,000. City funds will not exceed 50% of the commissioning budget.

DISCUSSION

For the September 25th deadline, 27 applications were received for a total request of \$634,820.

The requests were reviewed by an Assessment Committee using the evaluation criteria as established in the program guidelines. In brief, proposals were reviewed for artistic merit, organizational and artist capacity, and potential community impact. Applications were reviewed, support material was viewed or read and staff had meetings or discussions with the applicant groups prior to the Assessment Committee meetings.

The independent Assessment Committee members for the 2006 pilot Commissioning Program were selected through an open call for nominations. Members were selected for their artistic

expertise in the disciplines of visual and media arts, theatre, dance and music. The community members are as follows:

- Liane Davison, Curator, Surrey Art Gallery
- C.E. Gatchalian, Playwright, Playwriting Instructor - Langara College
- Andrea Gunnlaugson, Dancer, Administrator - Dancer Transition Resource Centre
- Rodney Sharman, Composer

Staff from the Office of Cultural Affairs also participated in the assessment process.

The Assessment Committee made recommendations in support of those applications that best met all program objectives and criteria. Based on the available funding and the mandate to focus resources, six groups were recommended for support as outlined in Table 1 below. Please see Appendix B for further descriptions of the projects and rationale for the Assessment Committee recommendations.

Table 1
Pilot Commissioning Program - Recommendations for support

Organization	Commissioning Project	Request Amount	Recommended Amount
Co. Erasga Dance Society	Jeina Morosoff (glass artist) Katherine Soucie (fibre artist) to collaborate on glass sculptures and costume design for a new dance piece	\$11,000	\$11,000
PuSh International Performing Arts Society	Jay White, Sherry Yoon, Jay Dodge (Boca del Lupo) to create a new theatre piece, <i>My Dad My Dog</i> , to be presented at 2008 PuSh Festival	\$35,000	\$25,000
Rumble Productions Society	Hiro Kanagawa (playwright), David MacIntyre (composer), Rachel Ditor (dramaturg) to create new musical theatre piece based on a sequel to <i>Madame Butterfly</i>	\$50,000	\$25,000
Vancouver Opera Association	John Murrell (libretto) and John Estacio (composer) to create a new full length mainstage opera based on the journey of Lillian Alling	\$50,000	\$20,000
Vancouver Out on Screen Film Festival	John Greyson, Richard Fung, Ali Kazimi, Vede Hille, Ivan E. Coyote, Dana Claxton and Winston Xin to create videos based on Vancouver's queer history	\$33,200	\$21,160
Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company	Derek Edenshaw to create original songs, dances and scenes using traditional Haida language and storytelling for Phase II of the <i>Ninstints</i> project	\$17,000	\$17,000
TOTAL			\$119,160

In the context of a competitive grant round, available funding, and the mandate to focus resources into a limited number of large commissions, only those requests which best met the

program objectives and evaluative criteria were recommended for support. Please see Appendix C for a complete list of applicants.

At the end of the deliberations, members of the Assessment Committee were asked to provide feedback on the program so as to inform the evolution of the pilot Commissioning Program. Overall, members considered this program to be addressing a need in the community. They felt the program would allow the City to invest in significant projects which would have a lasting impact in the city as well on a national and international scale. Support to specifically pay artist fees was also strongly supported. They considered the program to be encouraging organizations to “think big” which they felt contributed to an environment of innovation and creativity. It was also noted that additional resources could be allocated to the program but not at the expense of other Cultural grant programs within the City. Committee members also felt that the program should continue well beyond 2010.

These comments will inform staff on how to evolve the program which will be reviewed in the context of the Creative City Strategic Planning process and Cultural grant and program reviews in 2007.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In July 2006, Council approved up to \$115,000 to be allocated to a pilot Commissioning Program, source of funds to be the strategic investment in 2006 Cultural Budget of \$700,000 within the 2006 Operating budget. Staff also recommend that the remaining balance of \$4,160 in the Theatre Rental Projects Grant program be re-allocated to the pilot Commissioning Program to make a total budget of \$119,160. Approval of recommendations A and B will leave no balance in the 2006 pilot Commissioning Program budget.

CONCLUSION

In a short period of time, there has been a significant level of interest expressed in the pilot Commissioning Program through the number of inquiries staff has responded to, as well as the number of applications received for the inaugural deadline.

Approval of this recommendation will assist the development of six important new works which will significantly enhance the vitality of arts and culture in Vancouver.

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COMMISSIONING PROGRAM INFORMATION (PILOT)

Deadline: **Monday, September 25, 2006
before 4:30 p.m.**



Office of Cultural Affairs
City of Vancouver
Cultural Services

Description

This program assists Vancouver professional arts and cultural organizations in commissioning original artwork by professional artists. Artwork may be commissioned in the disciplines of theatre, dance, music, literary, visual and media arts. This program is meant to support new initiatives of a significant scale which will profile Vancouver's artistic strengths to a local, national and international audience.

The program is meant to assist creation, development and production costs associated with the commissioning of new work. Proposals can be in the early development stages or already in progress.

This is a pilot program of the City of Vancouver for 2006.

Objectives

- To facilitate the creation of original work that reflects a high level of creativity and excellence and enhances the vitality of arts and culture in Vancouver;
- to support the development of original work on a major scale that showcases the artistic excellence of Vancouver to a local, national and international audience;
- to support professional artists in the development and creation of original work;
- to encourage artistic collaborations between organizations and artists that will lead to growth for both the creators and organizations;
- to promote diversity in the artistic life of the community;
- and to encourage accessibility and participation by a broad public audience.

Eligibility Criteria

All applicants should speak with a Cultural Planner first in order to gain a better understanding of the program and establish eligibility.

Organizational Criteria:

A single organization may apply alone or in collaboration with other arts organizations. One organization should be designated as the lead applicant organization. The partnering organizations should ideally meet the same criteria, although they do not have to reside in Vancouver or be registered as a non-profit society in BC.

- Must be registered as a non-profit society in BC for a minimum of one year and operate on a year round basis.
- Must be a professional arts & cultural organization engaged in creation, production, presentation and dissemination activities related to the performing, visual & media, and literary arts.
- Have established a working relationship with the artist(s) and organization(s) involved in the project.
- Will have a history of public presentation and/or developing and producing new work.

Organizational eligibility criteria continued on next page

Organizational Eligibility Criteria Continued

- Must have the intention to present the work publicly beyond creation and development.
- Must have ongoing paid professional artistic leadership and administration and must pay principal artistic contributors for their services in accordance with generally accepted professional standards.
- Must be based and active in Vancouver, and provide programming and services that are open to the public and publicized city-wide.
- Must have diversified revenues including funding from other levels of government, private sector and earned revenues.
- Must have completed all previously City funded project initiatives.

Artist Criteria:

- The commission can be to an individual artist or collective and can involve a partnership/collaboration with other artists. If more than one artist is involved, the collective, partnership/collaboration will be clearly defined.
- All artists involved must be professional artists. A professional artist is defined as: one who has received basic training in their field (through educational institution or practise), is recognized as such by peers working in the same artistic tradition, actively practises their art form and seeks payment for it, and has a history of public presentation or publication of their work.

Ineligible Applicants:

- Groups or artists who do not meet the above criteria.
- Civic departments or branches (libraries, community centres), social service, religious or sports organizations.
- Educational institutions (schools, colleges) do not qualify but stand-alone arts organizations that provide professional and pre-professional training for children and youth may be eligible if they meet all eligibility criteria.
- Lead and partnering organizations operating within cultural industries; publishing, motion picture, sound-recording, software, and broadcasting.
- Organizations that have not completed previously City-supported project initiatives.
- Directors or curators who wish to commission themselves, board members, artists in their regular employment, or members of their immediate family.
- Full time students.

Application Requirements:

- Applicants must complete and submit the appropriate signed, original application form, plus 3 additional copies and 1 electronic copy.
- A most recently completed board-approved audited or independently-prepared financial statement.
- A contract or agreement that outlines the responsibilities agreed upon by the organization(s) and artist(s). This should be signed by all parties and submitted as part of the application. The agreement can be made contingent upon receipt of funding. The contract will detail: scope and responsibilities of the project, ownership, copyright/royalties, payment schedule to the artist(s), a detailed timeline of the complete proposal, a contingency plan.

Application Requirements Continued

- There must be a demonstrated need for financial assistance for the organization and the proposed commissioning initiative.
- The commissioning organization should have the intention to present the work publicly to Vancouver audiences.
- The commissioning organization must meet current recognized industry fee standards in their payment to artists.
- All parties will adhere to the terms of the Canadian Copyright Act.
- Proposals can be in the early development stages or already in progress. It is to the advantage of the applicant to provide as much confirmed information as possible to assist the assessment process.
- Only one application per organization and per commission will be considered.

Eligible commissions may include the following:

- Dance – the commission of a new choreographed work in any dance genre.
- Music - the commission of a new composition in any musical genre.
- Theatre - the commission of a new play or theatrical work.
- Visual & Media arts - the commission of new work including painting, sculpture, drawing, photography, craft, mixed media, installation, performance art, works in new media, film or video.
- Literary - the commission of a new work including poetry, long and short fiction, non-fiction, spoken word and storytelling.

Subsistence/research/travel costs directly related to the commissioning activities are also eligible. A small portion of administration costs directly related to the commission can also be considered.

Ineligible Activities/Exclusions:

- Ongoing costs or regular activity of the organization(s)
- Capital expenses (some small equipment costs may apply if it is directly related to the creation and development of work)
- Organization deficits
- Courses or other forms of training
- Commissions solicited through an open call or competition

Evaluation Criteria:

- Degree to which the proposal addresses the program objectives
- Artistic merit of the proposed commission
- Quality of the artist(s)' work, quality of the support materials as submitted and qualifications of the artist(s)
- Demonstrated commitment of all parties involved
- Experience and organizational competence of commissioning organization(s)
- Degree to which the proposed commission, as outlined in a detailed plan, is artistically and financially achievable
- Potential impact on the development of the artist(s) and organization(s) involved and of the art form itself
- The anticipated impact on local, provincial, national and international audiences
- Potential for the public presentation and dissemination of the work

Process:

The application deadline is September 25, 2006.

Following the deadline, an Assessment Committee comprised of independent members of the arts and cultural community and staff from the Office of Cultural Affairs review the grant applications. Following the review process, recommendations are made by the Assessment Committee to City Council. A written notice of the recommendation is sent to all applicants and notice of the City Council meeting date at which the recommendations will be considered. All applicants receive notification of the results approximately 10 weeks after the deadline. Successful applicants will receive grant payment approximately 12 weeks after the application deadline.

Level of Grant:

The minimum request is \$10,000 up to a maximum of \$50,000, per commission proposal. Applicants are expected to secure revenues from several sources other than the City of Vancouver. Generally, the City's contribution will not exceed 50% of total eligible commissioning project costs which can include creation, development and production.

Groups who are interested in developing and producing new work of a smaller-scale are advised to contact staff to discuss other programs available through the Office of Cultural Affairs.

This program aims to provide an opportunity for organizations to realize work of a significant level outside of their normal operations. Therefore the program seeks to make an investment in a limited number of large commissions, and it is anticipated that between three to seven projects will receive support through this pilot program in 2006.

Conditions of Assistance:

- Grants funds must be applied to eligible expenses only and not used for any other purpose (i.e. general operating costs, other projects, reducing deficits, etc.)
- The Society will make every effort to secure funding from other sources as indicated in its application. It will keep proper books of accounts of all receipts and expenditures relating to its activities and, upon the City's request, make available for inspection by the City or its auditors all records and books of account.
- If there are any changes in the organization's activities as presented in the application, the Office of Cultural Affairs must be notified in writing of such changes. In the event that the grant funds are not used for the organization's activities as described in the application, they are to be re-paid to the City in full. If the activities are completed without requiring the full use of city funds, the remaining City funds are also to be returned to the City.
- City of Vancouver assistance must be appropriately acknowledged in all promotional materials and at all promotional or celebratory events relating to funded activities. This means that if the logos of other funders (including Corporate sponsors) are used in your acknowledgements, the City's logo will also be used.
- Receipt of a grant does not guarantee funding in the following fiscal year.
- All recipients must submit a final report within 6 months of completion of the funded project.

Confidentiality and Freedom of Information

All information submitted with the application is subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. The information collected will be used in confidence by members of the Assessment Committee (staff of OCA and members of the arts and cultural community) for the sole purposes of evaluation. The names of all applicants, those who are recommended for funding and those who are not, will be made public.

Contact Information

For more information and to obtain an application form, please contact:

Office of Cultural Affairs
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4
Tel (604) 871-6434
Fax (604) 871-6005
website: vancouver.ca/culture
email: oca@vancouver.ca

Offices located at:
Suite 310 – 555 West 12th Avenue
East Tower, City Square Mall

Ce dépliant décrit des programmes de subvention organisé par la Ville de Vancouver pour les compagnies artistiques.

Este folleto describe los programas de becas financieras de la Municipalidad de Vancouver para organizaciones artísticas.

Tài liệu này trình bày về những chương trình tài trợ của Thành Phố Vancouver dành cho các nhóm nghệ thuật.

這份刊物描述溫哥華市政府一個為藝術團體而設的補助金計劃。

ਇਸ ਫਿਲਾਫਲ ਵਿਚ ਅਸਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਭੀ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਹੈ।

Recommended for Assistance**Company Erasga Dance Society****\$11,000**

Company Erasga Dance Society is a Vancouver-based contemporary dance company founded on the principles of innovation, artistic integrity and social reflection. Their work explores diverse and complex issues such as the nature of gender identity, ethnicity in a global world, and the nature of self in relation to the creation of art.

A commissioning grant of \$11,000 is recommended for Co. Erasga Dance to commission glass artist Jeina Morosoff and fibre artist/costume designer Katherine Soucie to collaborate in the creation of a large-scale installation of glass sculptures and the costume designs for a new dance piece choreographed by Co. Erasga's Artistic Director Alvin Tolentino and Toronto-based choreographer, Peter Chin. This new dance work will also feature an original sound score and be presented at the Vancouver Centre for Contemporary Art during two weeks of performances in July, 2007. The Assessment Committee considered this to be an opportunity to look beyond the creation of movement and view the body as design. The diversity of the artists involved and the benefits of that exchange was considered to be strong. The community impact through workshops, studio showings and other outreach initiatives during the creative process and a free public performance was also highly supported.

Push International Performing Arts Festival Society**\$25,000**

Push International Performing Arts Festival is the producer of a mid-winter performing arts festival which presents local, national and international artists and their work. PuSh presents contemporary performance while promoting cultural exchange and development.

A grant of \$25,000 is recommended to commission an original work of theatre by Sherry Yoon, Jay Dodge, and Jay White of local theatre company, Boca del Lupo. This full-length piece entitled "*My Dad My Dog*" portrays the story of a Korean woman's relationship with her pet dog, whom she believes is her dad reincarnated. This new work will premiere with a 12-performance run at the PuSh Festival in Feb. 2008. This commission would allow animator Jay White to work with Sherry Yoon and Jay Dodge to further investigate the collaboration between live animation and live performance. The Assessment Committee recognized this initiative would advance an innovative style of creation, further developing the artists and their practise. They considered the partnership with PuSh to be providing them with marketing and production support which would allow them to focus on the development of the work.

Rumble Productions Society**\$25,000**

Founded in 1990, Rumble Productions is a multidisciplinary mid-size performing arts organization who collaborates with artists from Vancouver and beyond to produce and present theatre and other media.

A grant of \$25,000 is recommended to Rumble Productions to commission an original musical theatre work by two locals artists: playwright Hiro Kanagawa and composer David MacIntyre. Likely scheduled to premiere in the fall of 2008 for a run of approximately 14 performances,

the two-act mainstage work entitled *Tom Pinkerton* will be a contemporary continuation of returning and new characters from Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly*. This commission would allow the playwright, composer and dramaturg an extended period of writing, workshopping and creative development.

The Vancouver Opera Association

\$20,000

The Vancouver Opera Association was established in 1960 and is committed to presenting first-class performances to audiences at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre and enriched education and community programming that expands the exposure of a timeless art form to communities throughout the city, region and province.

A grant of \$20,000 is recommended to support the development phase of a new mainstage opera entitled "*Lillian Alling*". This opera will follow the journey of this historic figure – a Ukrainian immigrant from New York who travelled across Canada in an attempt to return to her homeland. The commission is to John Murrell (libretto) and John Estacio (composer) to create a 150 minute, two-act opera, which they aim to premiere at the Queen Elizabeth Theatre in 2010. The Assessment Committee noted the scope of commissioning a mainstage opera and the extensive resources required to develop a work which would engage a cast of 9, a chorus of 36 and up to 60 orchestra members. They recognized the high calibre of the artists involved and the potential impact this Canadian story would have in the community.

Vancouver Out On Screen Film and Video Society

\$21,160

The Vancouver Out On Screen Film and Video Society promotes the production and exhibition of queer media art, creating opportunities for dialogue and education among diverse communities that cross class, age, ability, ethnicity, spirituality, gender and sexuality. They produce the Out on Screen Film & Video Festival to over 10,000 patrons annually and provide high school education programs through Out in Schools.

A grant of \$21,160 is recommended to Out On Screen (OOS) to commission 7 artists to collaboratively create three separate video works exploring the under-represented stories of Vancouver's gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered communities. The artists are John Greyson, Richard Fung, Ali Kazimi, Vede Hille, Ivan E. Coyote, Dana Claxton and Winston Xin. Each work will be 15-20 minutes long culminating in a thematically linked short program that will premier in three public exhibitions in the local neighbourhoods that inspired the work and at the festival in August of 2007. The Assessment Committee considered this to be an important initiative highlighting many distinct communities in Vancouver and involving several well-regarded artists. The benefits to the artists in terms of collaboration and exposure were clear while OOS benefits from an original exhibition with strong links to a local community and great potential to reach audiences well beyond.

Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company

\$17,000

The Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company manages and operates a professional theatre company and production centre. The Playhouse produces a mainstage series of five plays each year to audiences throughout the Lower Mainland, BC and Canada and offers a series of community outreach, artistic development and educational programmes.

A grant of \$17,000 is recommended to Vancouver Playhouse Theatre Company for Phase II of the *Ninstints* Project. In co-production with the Belfry Theatre in Victoria, the Playhouse will commission Haida artist Derek Edenshaw to write original songs, dances and scenes for the play using traditional language and storytelling forms. A lengthy development period will enable *Ninstints* to develop into a large-scale work of musical theatre which will likely premiere in the fall of 2008 at the Vancouver Playhouse Theatre and then open for a subsequent run in Victoria. This commission would allow Derek Edenshaw to work with playwright Bruce Ruddell and six Haida performers in a three-week workshop process to create a major component of the work for the mythical Haida Gwaii portion of the story. The Assessment Committee noted the comprehensive outreach undertaken by the organization, the thoughtful process outlined, the strength and authenticity of the artist's aboriginal voice in the work, the direct relevance of the piece to the local community, as well as the commitment from a significant number of the community's senior musical and theatre artists.

Organ	Request	Recomm
1 Anatomica Dance Soc. (formerly Frozen Eye Dance Soc.)	14,000	0
2 Arts Club of Vancouver Theatre Soc.	25,000	0
3 Axis Theatre Soc.	30,000	0
4 Children's Festival (Can. Institute of the Arts for Young Audiences)	15,000	0
5 Co. Erasga Dance Soc.	11,000	11,000
6 Coastal Jazz and Blues Soc.	27,800	0
7 Early Music Vancouver (Van. Soc. for Early Music)	40,000	0
8 Gallery Gachet Soc.	18,000	0
9 Green Thumb Theatre for Young People (Green Thumb Players Soc.)	13,000	0
10 grunt gallery (Visible Arts Soc.)	20,000	0
11 Holy Body Tattoo Soc.	20,000	0
12 Joe Ink Performance Soc.	22,000	0
13 New Orchestra Workshop Soc.	22,000	0
14 Norman Rothstein Theatre (Van. Westside Theatre Soc.)	10,000	0
15 PuSH International Performing Arts Festival Soc.	35,000	25,000
16 Radix Theatre Soc.	15,000	0
17 Rumble Productions Soc.	50,000	25,000
18 Solo Collective Theatre Soc.	22,000	0
19 Théâtre la Seizième	36,750	0
20 Turning Point Ensemble	25,000	0
21 Van. Intl. Dance Festival Soc.	10,000	0
22 Van. New Music Soc.	10,000	0
23 Van. Opera Assn.	50,000	20,000
24 Van. Out on Screen Film Festival Soc.	33,200	21,160
25 Van. Playhouse Theatre Company	17,000	17,000
26 Van. Tap Dance Soc.	25,070	0
27 Western Front Soc.	18,000	0
Total	634,820	119,160